



A SYSTEM OF WASTE AND ROT

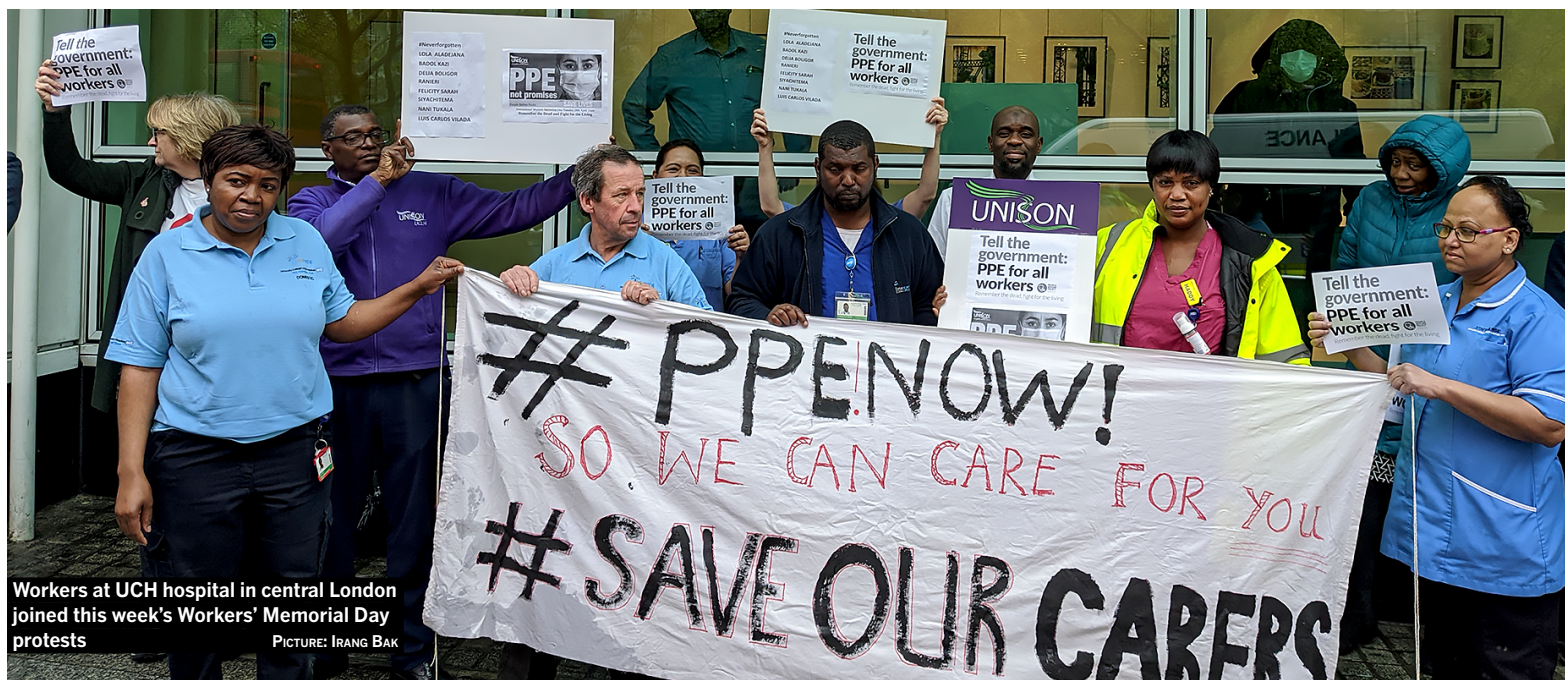
OVER 200 MILLION GOING HUNGRY WHILE PRODUCERS DESTROY TONS OF FOOD >>PAGES 10&11

WORLD ECONOMY IN TURMOIL—WHO WILL PAY FOR THE CRISIS? >>PAGES 14&15

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AFTER WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY ACTION



Workers at UCH hospital in central London joined this week's Workers' Memorial Day protests

PICTURE: IRANG BAK

ACT NOW TO STOP KILLER TORIES

UNIONS MUST STEP UP THE RESISTANCE

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

WORKERS TOOK action on Tuesday to save lives as the Tories' deadly lies and inaction over coronavirus continue.

It came after weeks of Tory failures that have seen the official death toll rise to over 21,000 and

Continues on pages 4&5



TORIES

Our rulers are hiding the real death figures

SEVERAL MAJOR studies suggest there is massive under-reporting globally of the scale of coronavirus deaths—and that Britain is one of the world leaders in the cover-up.

A Financial Times analysis said Covid-19 has caused over 40,000 deaths in Britain—twice the government estimate.

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AFRICA



Locust swarms are a product of climate change

MONSTROUSLY large numbers of locusts are tearing through East Africa, leaving devastation and increased food shortages in their wake.

Some 40 percent of the 160 million people in the region are undernourished.

Climate change is the driving factor of the swarms.

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UNITED STATES

Resistance as Trump pushes end to lockdown

DONALD TRUMP is pushing for the US to get back to work as soon as possible—regardless of the cost in human lives.

But as state governors follow his demands, workers in some areas are fighting back to protect lives.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'There are more important things than living'

The lieutenant governor of Texas **Dan Patrick** opposes the lockdowns

'We're crushing the markets'

Patrick on the 'more important things' that are suffering

'Women have excelled in the corona crisis'

The **Guardian** newspaper explains why some countries have fewer deaths than others

'I would continue my work because that's the sort of person I am'

Tory MP **Tobias Ellwood** says he'd carry on if he was a care worker with insufficient kit

'By injection inside or almost a cleaning'

US president **Donald Trump** suggests injecting disinfectant into people to tackle Covid-19

'Sarcastic'

Trump insists he didn't really mean it

'Coronavirus test: applications closed'

The website set up for key workers to book Covid-19 tests stops accepting applications.



Rich learn how to clean their own homes as virus crisis hit

WHILE SOME headlines focus on lack of safety kit at work or the rising benefit claims, there's a hidden group of coronavirus victims—the rich.

Some toffs have lost their staff as they self-isolate or are furloughed. So they are learning to clean.

Lucy Challenger is boss of domestic staff firm Polo & Tweed in Mayfair, London.

She said the firm is now getting "calls day in, day out" from the rich pleading for help.

They want to know how to change a bed or do washing.

"People are having to launder and iron and fold for the first time," explained Lucy.

Polo & Tweed has nobly stepped up to the plate, offering classes in tasks such as ironing.



LADY CARNARVON hoovers up—but puts off polishing the silver

The rich will get certificates if they pass. And the wealthy can get specific advice, such as how to clean their chandeliers, if they require it.

If you're fed up being stuck in overcrowded housing during the lockdown, remember the downsides of having more space.

As Lucy put it, "People might think, 'Hang on, why can't the person who owns the house pick up the Hoover and off they go?'"

"But picking up a Hoover in a property that has 30 bedrooms would take you a month to complete."

The Countess of Carnarvon, chatelaine of the

vast Highclere Castle which was the film location for TV drama *Downton Abbey*, is one of those most affected.

Fiona, as she likes to be called, is trying to keep on top of 300 rooms at the castle.

"I went to get the vacuum cleaner—I know exactly where they are kept," she proudly explained.

"But doing that took me long enough."

The countess said that walking around to check if any lights have been left on "takes 40 minutes".

"I would love to have the time to do every inch of the place, but I just don't," she said.

So some things, including dusting and polishing of silver, "will have to wait".

We truly are all making sacrifices under the lockdown.

● GWYNETH PALTROW has published advice for how to have a "date night" under lockdown.

It will cost you a mere £3,000—and that's before you've bought any food or drink.

Handily, all the necessary products are available at Paltrow's Goop website. They include a set of pans for £307 and plates for £240.

Gwyneth Paltrow

● A HUMAN life in Britain is valued at £2.4 million—at best—based on figures used by the Nice health provision group.

The equivalent figure in Germany is around £12 million.

Some suggest the government use Nice figures to judge if continuing the lockdown makes financial sense.

Tories were warned of pandemic threat

GOVERNMENT ministers were warned last year that Britain needed a plan to deal with a pandemic virus.

A confidential Cabinet Office briefing leaked last week warned that even a mild pandemic could kill tens of thousands.

The National Security Risk Assessment said, "A novel pandemic virus could be both highly transmissible and highly virulent."

"Pandemics significantly more serious than the reasonable worst case are possible."

The briefing was signed off by Sir Patrick Vallance, the government's chief scientific adviser. It

recommended stockpiling personal protective equipment and organising advanced purchase agreements for other kit.

It also recommended that the government establish procedures for disease surveillance and contact tracing.

But a source said, "There was a national plan for dealing with a pandemic."

"But who took control of that?"

"Who was responsible for making sure plans were being made at a local level?"

"I am not sure anyone was doing this. We have been caught out."

The paper said a moderate pandemic could lead to 65,600 deaths.

Furlough cash goes to Cayman Islands

RICH BOSSES are doing very well out of the Tories' furlough scheme. The scheme is supposed to protect workers' jobs by underwriting most of their wages and keeping them from being sacked.

But it's also another handout to the rich. Stonegate Pubs has taken millions of pounds of our money and furloughed 16,500 workers—despite being based in the Cayman Islands. The firm

owns Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Yates. It has paid no corporation tax in Britain, blaming "exceptional costs" which include paying bonuses.

● VICTORIA Beckham has furloughed 30 workers at her VB fashion label—despite having a family fortune of around £335 million.

Apparently staff have received letters saying they will receive only 80 percent of their

wages under the government scheme.

So she won't be topping up the rest then.



No corporation tax paid here

Tests for the super-rich in Saint-Tropez

LOCKDOWN IS a breeze for the super-rich residents of the gated community of Les Parc de Saint-Tropez in France.

Its president has set up a private testing site for coronavirus there for residents and their friends.

Meanwhile health workers in local hospitals can't get hold of tests.

Saint-Tropez mayor **Jean-Pierre Tuveri** said the tests were done "under the aegis of the Pasteur Institute".

The institute said it knew nothing about the tests and that the mayor's statement was "quite suspicious".



TOFF OF THE WEEK

The queen Top royal scrounger

● The queen has had to quit horse riding due to the lockdown.

● The Daily Mail told us last week that she is at Windsor Castle with prince Philip.

● But its source 'revealed' that they 'get on well'.

● The queen has slashed her waiting staff to 'around a dozen' during the crisis

Arms sales to repressive regimes soar

BRITAIN SOLD nearly 400 percent more arms to repressive regimes last year compared to 2018.

In 2018, Britain sold £173 million worth of arms to states the Foreign Office calls "human rights priority countries".

Last year this rose to £849 million—an increase of 390 percent.

And more rises are on the cards.

The DSEI arms fair already plans to be back at London's Excel centre in September next year—once it's done being a hospital for Covid-19.

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Tories failing to provide tests and protective gear

by SARAH BATES

THE FAILURES of the Tory government are continuing to threaten the lives of millions of ordinary people.

Despite ministers' lies and Boris Johnson's boasts, the government still isn't delivering lifesaving Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or a mass testing regime.

Health secretary Matt Hancock promised 100,000 tests a day by the end of April—but at the start of the week his department was only carrying out around 20,000 a week.

Last Friday the government released a much-delayed online system for key workers to book a slot at a drive-in testing centre or order a home kit.

But the 16,000 available testing slots and kits were gone within minutes—around three times as many people tried to access the website.

Nearest

There are just 30 drive-through testing centres across Britain—with some workers facing a journey of up to 240 miles to access their nearest centre.

NHS staff, care workers, emergency services, teachers and transport workers are all listed as key workers.

But some key workers were turned away from the centre despite booking a slot. Natalie Orton-Rose is one of them.

She had been self-isolating and had driven an hour to the test centre in Nottingham, after her doctor told her it was likely she had contracted Covid-19.

"I am absolutely disgusted," she said. "It is bad enough that my closest test centre is an hour away but then to waste my time and fuel."

"The government and public need to be aware that just because you have an appointment doesn't mean you'll get the very much needed test."

KEY WORKERS are still not getting the protective gear and testing they need

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) said that some workers undertaking aerosol generating procedures—and the parts of hospitals where workers are at the highest risk from coronavirus—are still struggling to get hold of kit.

It said that 31 percent of workers couldn't get long-sleeved disposable gowns and 37 percent couldn't get full face visors.

The Department of Health and Social Care claimed to be "working night and day" to make sure workers had PPE—and said it had delivered over a billion items of kit.

But regardless of its bloated figures—if workers are struggling to access equipment, there isn't enough of it.

RCP president professor Andrew Goddard said, "Healthcare workers

risking their lives couldn't care less how many billion pieces of PPE have been ordered or supplied.

"If it isn't there when they need it, they are in harm's way."

The Tories' PPE and testing failures aren't some sort of aberration from their coronavirus strategy—but a heartbreaking example of how those at the top of society hold ordinary people in contempt.

No change in cruel Universal Credit

THE GOVERNMENT has refused to make the Universal Credit benefit regime any less punishing.

Tory welfare delivery minister Will Quince said last week that administrative costs meant "it wasn't even really considered as an option" to change the benefits structure or to turn the loans given to bridge the five-week wait into grants.

Giving evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Quince said, "Even if we were able to secure the £2.2 billion a year

Tory benefit regime is cruel

that would be required to do that, it is not operationally deliverable.

"And that is the biggest reason, amongst many, many others, why it wasn't even really considered as an option."

Neil Couling from the Department for Work and Pensions said recovering advances from people was already built into the computer system and would need "human beings" to staff such a significant change.

In the six weeks up to 12 April, 1.5 million people applied for universal credit, and around 560,000 people have had advance payments processed since 16 March.

Fifty leading anti-poverty campaigners last week issued a letter saying that tens of thousands of families forced to sign on to universal credit in the last few weeks would discover they would receive no support for any third and subsequent children born since April 2017.

This is because of the two child limit on benefits. Campaigners called for a change to the regulations.

Not up to basic standards

A FURTHER sign of Tory failure came in a Sunday Times article warning that soon Britain "will be short of up to a billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE), according to a secret forecast commissioned by the government".

"Fears have been raised not only about the quantity of PPE—which includes gowns, masks and gloves—being given to medical staff, but also the quality," it said.

A Whitehall source claimed the standards of equipment in the UK had developing countries "watching in horror".

"There is ever-growing concern about PPE because the quality of Public Health England guidance has been woeful," said the senior Whitehall insider.

"Every day we run out of something, the advice is downgraded and we are now running at standards lower than [recommended by] the International Red Cross and the World Health Organisation."

"We have always been so smug about ourselves as a developed country, but now we have nations we send aid to watching us in horror."

Testing times

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NHS staff take action over virus failings of killer Tories

>>>from page one

workers put at risk. The TUC union federation had called for a minute's silence on International Workers' Memorial Day to "pay tribute to the sacrifice made of so many workers during the pandemic".

After Boris Johnson backed the protest on Monday night, the pressure was on for it to become a show of "national unity".

But in some workplaces activists made sure the fire was clearly on the Tories.

In Wigan, health and social care workers at the council walked out and held a rally in the town centre.

Unison union rep Dave told Socialist Worker, "Around 30 of us were at the rally. We did the minute's silence, laid wreaths at the monument and held signs demanding PPE for all workers."

The RMT transport union and Bfawu bakers' union from Hovis showed support.

Dave said, "It shows that there is opposition for us to take forward. We need to direct our anger against the government."

Outside Salford hospital, members of Unison's local government and health branches and the trades council brought their union banners and staged a minute's silence.

Ameen, a Salford City Unison member, told Socialist Worker, "We normally have a Workers' Memorial Day event. But we decided to have an actual protest because we wanted to show solidarity with NHS workers."

Negligent

"The government is being negligent as health workers go into work without the right support. We really have to fight for the living."

Around 100 people, mainly health workers, protested outside North Manchester General Hospital.

They held a minute's silence—and then protested to "fight for the living," despite objections from a manager.

Nurse Karen joined the protest. "Health workers are dying, they don't have the right PPE and it's unacceptable," she told Socialist Worker. "The government needs to be made to listen and see that we are

frustrated—and the only way they understand is by us protesting.

"There's something really horrible about sitting at home or going to work and watching people die. When you protest or cover your car with posters, you feel that you're doing something to make it stop."

At UCH Hospital in central London, Unison members marked the minute's silence with placards demanding PPE for all. Janet, a nurse at UCH, told Socialist Worker, "We were pleased that unions called the minute's silence."

"But there needed to be a political message to the government, not just passively performing it."

At the Whittington Hospital in Islington, north London, the trades council and local Covid-19 action committee held a socially distanced protest backed by Unison, GMB and RMT members.

A protest outside Lewisham Hospital was supported by the south east London Covid action group, trade unionists on Lewisham trades council, and others.

Maggie Palmer, a Unite rep who helped to organise the protest, told Socialist Worker, "People were keen to come out. Trade unionists from the NHS, the bus garage, the trades council and the Labour Party joined it."

At Warneford hospital in Oxford a joint union meeting and minute's silence saw workers demanding action on PPE.

Trafford General hospital in Greater Manchester saw a protest by workers and supporters.

There was also a protest outside Queen Elizabeth hospital in Greenwich, south east London, where an outsourced cleaner was suspended for refusing to work without protective equipment (see page 7). The disciplined worker joined the protest.

And in Tower Hamlets, east London, around 20 community health workers came out holding banners demanding PPE.

Trade unionists have to build a fight against the Tories and bosses who are gambling with our lives.

For a longer version go to bit.ly/SW-WMDarticle



WARNEFORD HOSPITAL in Oxford

Groups of workers gather to call for proper protective equipment

IT WASN'T only health workers who held protests on Workers' Memorial Day.

In west London, Brent trades council and the local coronavirus action group organised an assembly outside Willesden Bus Garage.

Ashok, a socialist activist in west London, told Socialist Worker, "We have a lot more people than expected."

"We had around 20 people from the trade unions and campaigns. But then a load of bus workers came out to join what we were doing, so there were around 40 of us."

Activists in a dozen cars held a cavalcade outside North Middlesex Hospital. It was organised by Haringey Coronavirus Action Network and Haringey TUC.

Local activist Simon Hester reported, "The joint unions held a massive event inside the hospital, due to pouring rain."

"It was originally planned for outside with us. We received thanks from the Unite and RCN



Bus workers in west London on Tuesday

PICTURE: ASHOK PURSANI

reps. We then took our convoy all the way down Tottenham High Road with hazards on, horns blaring and megaphones broadcasting like a Kurdish wedding as one of our day Mer comrades pointed out."

And cleaners at the Ministry of Justice in central London walked out to protest over the lack of PPE in their workplace.

Carlos Alberto who works as a cleaner there said, "In the last week two colleagues died."

"I don't know if it was the

virus, but they don't give us appropriate material, they don't give masks or chemicals".

In Newcastle, supporters of the newly formed coronavirus activists group held a series of banner drops from bridges.

Postal workers across Britain marked the silence and in some areas held up placards demanding PPE for all who need it.

And activists in Sheffield, south Yorkshire, laid wreaths in a socially distanced protest in the city centre.

Weekly claps for carers can become big protests

HEALTH workers and campaigners have been raising slogans against the Tories during the weekly Clap for the NHS on Thursdays.

Outside some hospitals, workers come outside for the weekly claps.

In Manchester, health workers and campaigners organised a ten-car cavalcade at South Manchester hospital on Thursday of last week.

With cars draped

in homemade posters, they parked by the hospital.

People chanted, "Test, test, test, PPE, keep our workers virus free," and "Test, test, test, PPE, keep our frontline virus free."

On the same night, supporters of the West Midlands Coronavirus Action Group went down to a hospital in Birmingham.

In other places, activists have turned the weekly claps into a socially distanced

protest on their street.

Rebecca, a health worker in Sheffield, told Socialist Worker, "Everyone was out and even people who couldn't come out were in windows."

"I went up and down the street with a megaphone and placards, chanting about PPE for all key workers."

"The following week our neighbours asked us if we could bring out the megaphone again."



Health workers and supporters join the clap in Bradford

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

Lewisham Hospital cleaners bag a 'significant win' on pay

Outsourced workers at a south east London hospital have won a "significant win" after a walkout last month.

The action by Lewisham Hospital cleaners has forced subcontractor ISS to cough up unpaid wages.

Workers were angry after they didn't receive their full wages in February.

After bosses failed to pay up in March, workers staged an unofficial lunchtime walkout.

The workers' GMB union said they have now been "paid in full with backpay which brings the cleaners' hourly rate of pay up to £10.55 an hour".

Helen O'Connor, a GMB union organiser, said, "These brave hospital cleaners

endured threats and bullying throughout their dispute, but their persistence has now paid off."

"The success of the Lewisham Hospital campaign shows that when unions and communities work together, they can

and do win against corporate power."

The win in Lewisham shows it's right to keep up workers' struggle during the coronavirus crisis.

Workers should not go along with Labour leaders' appeal for social peace and national unity.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

WORKPLACE ACTION MUST BE CENTRAL TO FIGHT

THE ACTIONS on Workers' Memorial Day on Tuesday showed there is bitterness and anger among the working class about how people have been treated during this crisis.

Now we need more action. There is much talk of never going back to the toxic set-up before the coronavirus crisis hit.

That's right, but we can't wait until "afterwards"—whenever that is—to start the fightback.

What happens in the future will be shaped by protests, walkouts and organisation that are forged now.

That's why every anti-Tory action has mattered and must be a launchpad for more.

We have to pressure union leaders to stop cooperating with the Tories and start fighting them.

The TUC union federation is currently looking at how to shape post-lockdown Britain.

It wants to sit down with business heads, union leaders and the government for a "national council for reconstruction and recovery".

But a plan made between business and unions isn't the mechanism for a safe response

to coronavirus. Sitting round the table would be a group of people criminally negligent for their handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Tory government has failed to secure the bare minimum of protective equipment and virus testing to keep ordinary people safe.

And bosses are keen to force workers back into their jobs. They claim this is "keeping the economy going".

But it's simply self-interest that's pushing them to demand this—they want to keep their businesses functioning and the profits rolling in. Workers are being forced to work in conditions that are

“**There will be huge battles to be waged about what return to work will look like**”

INTERNATIONALISM MATTERS

WHEN THE working class is faced with global crises, an internationalist response is needed. The coronavirus outbreak is clearly one such crisis.

As it spread rapidly across the world, every government had the same priority—to protect business, not people's lives.

And as the outbreak triggers a huge global economic crash, those same governments will look for ways to make us pay.

The impending prospect of catastrophic climate change is

another. People in the global south are already bearing the brunt of a crisis created largely by capitalists in the global north. But everyone faces a very near future of extreme weather events, heatwaves, floods, droughts and plagues.

Those are two of the things we should keep in mind on May Day—international workers' day.

But while it's very easy to talk of internationalism on May Day, what that actually means is not always straightforward.

For one thing it should mean

not accepting that overcoming the coronavirus crisis means rescuing the British economy. That's for bosses competing with each other in the global market.

It also means not falling into arguments that can divide us—demanding more controls against migrants and refugees for example.

Instead it means taking inspiration from workers in other countries fighting the same struggles that we do. And doing our best to show solidarity with resistance of our own.

Breakfast in



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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Science advice is shaped by politics

THE LATEST bombshell to explode in the government's face has hit its claim to base its policy for the Covid-19 pandemic on "the science" or "the evidence". The Guardian newspaper revealed on Friday last week that the membership of the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (Sage) includes Boris Johnson's chief adviser, Dominic Cummings.

This is discreditable—apart from anything else Cummings dabbles in weird science. But the more interesting question is about the way in which the Tories try to cover their political choices beneath a fetishised "science".

Given the situation—the rapid spread of a death-dealing virus—it makes sense to draw on the expertise of different kinds of scientific specialists. But the political advantages of appealing to the authority of "science" is twofold.

Science is supposed to be certain, so choices based on it can't be contested. It is also meant to be neutral and independent of political parties and class interests.

But none of this is true. The greatest physical scientists—Isaac Newton, Charles Darwin, or Albert Einstein—produced theories that were fallible, and have been amended and sometimes replaced by their successors. The history of the sciences is one of controversy, criticism, self-criticism and revision.

This is particularly important when, as now, we are dealing with something new. As an article in Science magazine put it, "Despite the more than 1,000 papers now spilling into journals every week, a clear picture is elusive, as the virus acts like no pathogen humanity has ever seen."

One reason why the government and its advisers initially opted for the "herd immunity" strategy was because they were treating the virus as if it were a form of flu. There is some truth to the tweet by the quirky mathematician Nassim Nicholas Taleb, "The safest policy is to act as if we had no idea about the consequences of this."

This is why the most influential expert advice involves constructing statistical models based on the growing quantity of data on the virus's impact on human populations across the world. This is evidence all right, but statistical data don't tell you what they mean. They need to be interpreted.

Much of the controversy about the different studies of the pandemic focuses on the assumptions on which different models are based. These assumptions aren't dictated by the data but are used to organise them. And the theories that help form these assumptions are far from neutral. Sage includes two "behavioural scientists".

Structures

This is a form of pseudo-science that seeks to explain how people act socially on the basis of dodgy psychology and ignores the role of deep-seated structures such as capitalism, imperialism and class in shaping behaviour.

A contrasting approach is provided by Richard Horton, editor of the medical journal The Lancet. He has denounced the Johnson government's handling of the pandemic as "the biggest science policy failure in a generation".

In an interview with the Financial Times newspaper, Horton says he has been reading the historian-philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault developed the concept of "power-knowledge" in order to study how sciences develop in the context of and to serve particular forms of domination.

In The Birth of Biopolitics, the book Horton cites, he shows how liberal political economy took shape in the 18th century as part of the emergence of what Foucault called "governmentality"—state strategies to manage whole populations.

The pandemic in Britain is in many ways a case-study in neoliberal governmentality. It has inflicted mass deaths, particularly on the old and vulnerable in care homes, where the Financial Times estimates there have been 11,000 excess deaths. Horton fortunately advocates a very different relationship between science and politics.

"Some of the great advances, like the 19th century sanitary movement and the birth of the NHS, were not technical accomplishments but political struggles," he says. "The idea you can strip out politics from medicine or health is historically ignorant. The medical establishment should be much more politicised, not less, in attacking issues like health inequalities and poor access to care."

THE NUMBER of people who have died is much higher than the official Covid-19 mortality rate

Rulers hiding the true scale of deaths, new studies show

by CHARLIE KIMBER

SEVERAL MAJOR studies suggest there is massive under-reporting globally of the scale of coronavirus deaths—and that Britain is one of the world leaders in the cover-up.

A Financial Times analysis of data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said coronavirus has already caused as many as 41,000 deaths in Britain.

The newspaper's estimate was more than double the official figure of 17,337 at the time the analysis was released.

The study, released last week, is based on "excess deaths"—the increase in the number of deaths compared to the historical average for the same time of year.

The Tories don't include the people who die outside hospitals—such as in care homes—in the figures they announce each day.

Addition

In addition some of those who die with Covid-19 do not have it mentioned on their death certificate.

But it's difficult for the government to hide the total number of deaths from all causes.

The ONS data showed that deaths registered in the single

week ending 10 April were 75 percent above normal in England and Wales.

That's the highest level for more than 20 years. There were similar patterns in Scotland.

Nick Stripe, head of life events at the ONS, said the figure was "unprecedented", especially as the weather had been warm in the run-up to Easter.

Excess deaths from all causes stand 16,952 above the seasonal average across Britain since fatalities from

Covid-19 began to mount in mid-March.

Of course some of these are not necessarily directly due to coronavirus.

But even the ones that aren't may be because an under-prepared and under-resourced NHS concentrated its resources on coronavirus and away from other areas.

Whatever the difficulties with the data, coronavirus is the only convincing reason why death rates that were running at or below the

historical average have suddenly shot up.

The ONS figures are not fully up to date.

So the Financial Times extended them using the latest trends in the daily hospital deaths assuming the relationship between these and total excess deaths remained stable.

Using this calculation, the paper said, "A conservative estimate of UK excess deaths by 21 April was 41,102".

Analysis

The point is rammed home by analysis by The Economist magazine. Its research, which covers a different time period to the Financial Times one, indicates a third of Covid-19 deaths in Britain are being missed.

In addition the EuroMOMO group of academics from 24 European countries found that England and Wales has "extremely high excess" deaths.

It added that England and Wales's "z-score" shows the biggest excess of all the countries it studies.

A z-score is a statistical method enabling comparison of mortality patterns between different populations or between different time periods.

The figures the Tories announce are appalling. The reality is far worse.

Global fatalities also higher

SIMILAR research by the Financial Times newspaper indicates that the global death toll from coronavirus could be almost 60 percent higher than reported.

It analysed official death counts from 14 countries alongside overall fatalities.

Mortality figures showed 122,000 more deaths than death averages before Covid-19.

If this level of under-reporting is happening on a global scale, then the current fatality rate would

be 117,000 deaths higher than what is being reported.

The newspaper said that its research suggests that overall "excess deaths" rose by 60 percent in Belgium, 51 percent in Spain and 42 percent in the Netherlands.

Some of these deaths can be attributed as people who are otherwise ill are avoiding hospitals.

But excess mortality has risen most steeply in places suffering the worst Covid-19 outbreaks.

NHS staff face sack after calls for safe kit

Threats to health workers show up the Tory lie of 'national unity' says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

HEALTH BOSSES have threatened to sack at least two workers who asked for protective kit.

A Sussex healthcare assistant was "restricted" from working after she refused to work without proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in an area for confirmed coronavirus patients.

The suspended worker said seven workers were involved in a standoff with a manager at Eastbourne District General Hospital on 14 April.

They didn't feel safe working in just surgical masks and aprons rather than the higher grade masks and gowns.

In a letter to health secretary Matt Hancock, the healthcare assistant wrote that she arrived to find other workers standing against a wall.

She said, "They all said, 'We are standing here because there is no PPE and so we are not working. You can stand here with us if you agree.'"

"I agreed with them—as long as we are provided with PPE we will work, without PPE we won't."

The healthcare assistant said a more senior manager gave them the equipment after a nurse was sent home with a 38.9 degree temperature.

Restricted

Bosses at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust told her she was "restricted" from working for "refusing to wear PPE in line with national guidance".

Health workers have slammed the level of PPE available. The Nursing and Midwifery Council regulator has said workers can "decide to refuse to provide care or treatment to an individual because it is not safe for you to do so".

And the official Public Health England guidance says workers should have full kit when working with confirmed coronavirus cases.

The healthcare assistant told the Metro newspaper, "I said to her as the patients are confirmed to have coronavirus, the guidelines are to

BACK STORY

At least two health workers face the sack after asking for PPE

- Several health workers have contracted coronavirus after working in unsafe conditions
- One Sussex worker was suspended after refusing to work without proper protective kit
- And in south east London, a cleaner faces disciplinary measures after raising concerns
- Unions must back all workers who refuse to work in unsafe conditions

wear an FFP3 mask and full gown, goggles and visor upon entrance into a red zone.

"I was both flabbergasted and appalled that a person in a band 6 position would even use such language and refuse adequate PPE provisions."

Meanwhile, nurses on elderly patient wards in Leeds have refused to take shifts as they lack proper PPE.

An email from bosses said, "Some staff have been refusing to cover our older adults wards today to cover for staff sickness."

Outsourcer ISS has also begun disciplinary proceedings against a cleaner at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Woolwich in south east London.

He complained after being told he couldn't wear a face mask despite living with his vulnerable brother.

After the cleaner raised concerns, ISS falsely claimed it was disciplining him for "violent behaviour".

The suspension of the two health workers shows up the Tory hypocrisy over the NHS and the lie of "national unity".

Unions need to back all workers who refuse to work to protect their health and lives.



HEALTH WORKERS and supporters in Bradford

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

Starmer's 'real opposition' leaves the Tories unscathed over virus response

by **NICK CLARK**

MEDIA PUNDITS and right wing Labour politicians are hugely impressed by Labour leader Keir Starmer's response to the coronavirus. Few ordinary people will have noticed.

Starmer asked a few basic questions of Boris Johnson's stand-in Dominic Raab in parliament last week.

These included why so few coronavirus antibody tests have been carried out, why there is a shortage of protective equipment in the NHS, and how many care home workers have died due to coronavirus.

They're issues that expose the horrifying reality caused by the Tories' complete lack of care for the lives of ordinary people.

Measured

Yet instead of raging anger, Starmer chose to be measured and understated.

Raab couldn't put a figure on care home deaths, and MPs and media commentators swooned at how "forensic" Starmer had been. They all agreed that this was the proper opposition Labour had

waited years to be. Yet outside the parliamentary bubble the Tories came away completely unscathed, able to carry on exactly as before.

They should be facing a crisis over their failures.

All they face from Labour is a few uncomfortable minutes in parliament.

That's because Starmer decided from the very beginning of his leadership he would "engage constructively with the government, not opposition for opposition's sake".

So in an interview on Sunday, senior shadow cabinet minister Rachel Reeves chose to "urge" the government over vital questions of life and death.

She was careful not to challenge them or demand they do anything.

"I would urge the government to count the deaths in care homes in the same way they're counted in hospitals," she said.

"We're going to need mass testing at a community level. We're urging the government to work with local authorities, to open up town halls and libraries," she later added.

Starmer, Reeves and most other Labour MPs' biggest concern is

appearing to be respectable and responsible politicians.

They're more worried about convincing big business leaders that they can be trusted to manage the crisis than they are in voicing ordinary people's anger.

Anger

That's why Labour's main focus is not anger over the bosses still forcing thousands of people to work unnecessarily, for instance.

It's on ending the lockdown so that bosses can get more people back to work even faster.

Labour says this has to be done in a way that is "safe". But its politicians won't even say how.

In another interview shadow minister Rosena Allin-Khan said, "Labour isn't looking to have any sort of argument about what the exit strategy should be."

"What we are asking for is some strategy going forward."

Pushed on what Labour wants to see, she only asked for "greater understanding and clarity".

Labour politicians might imagine they're being "forensic" and clever.

In reality they're completely weak and toothless.



On other pages...

More bosses force staff back to work >>Page 20



IN BRIEF

Support for refugee activists in Australia

ACTIVISTS IN Australia are resisting attacks on their right to protest.

Some 26 people who joined a cavalcade earlier this month demanding refugees be freed from detention have been handed huge fines.

They are refusing to pay. Organiser Chris Breen was arrested and charged with incitement under an old anti-protest law.

The day before the refugee cavalcade, some workers in the



Chris Breen—fighting for refugees

United Workers Union held a cavalcade protest. Six have now been fined and have pledged to contest the ruling.

Support has flooded in for the campaigners.

Chris told Socialist Worker, “Police themselves organised a convoy for a boy’s birthday last week. And a right wing anti-lockdown protest of around 70 was allowed to take place.

“After the event, police said organisers would be fined. But they didn’t charge them with incitement or take the names of people who attended.”

Rush messages of support to refugeeactioncollective@gmail.com and go to Refugee Action Collective (Victoria) on Facebook for more information

Protests against cuts in Greece

TEACHERS AND high school students in Greece protested in public last Friday against attacks on education.

Greece’s Tory-type New Democracy government wants to force through changes including measures that make it harder for students to go to university. They also want to increase class sizes.

The government hopes to rush through the changes without resistance while lockdown measures are in place. Similar attacks on education provoked mass strikes by teachers in 2019.

Hundreds of teachers, many wearing masks and gloves, joined protests in dozens of cities on Friday despite the lockdown. They defied attempts by police to break the protests up. The protests followed a day of action by health workers earlier this month.

Trump wants speedy and deadly return to work

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

DONALD TRUMP is pushing for the US to get back to work as soon as possible.

US states of Georgia, South Carolina, Oklahoma and Alaska all started removing some restrictions on businesses last week.

In Georgia, restaurants and cinemas can re-open from this week. Colorado, Minnesota, and Montana, all with Democrat party governors, issued plans to begin opening up businesses this week.

Encouraged by the lead from the top, aerospace giant Boeing has started production again and car makers are also beginning a restart.

More than 26 million workers have been made jobless over the course of the past month.

Bosses are using the threat of sacking workers who have been furloughed to force them back to work.

But there has been resistance.

On Friday of last week, several hundred workers at Amazon sites called in sick to protest against the lack of safety measures at warehouses.

And on the same day 125 workers at the St Monica Centre for Rehabilitation & Healthcare nursing home in South Philadelphia voted to strike.

Total deaths from coronavirus in the US have been nearing 60,000 at the start of this week.

Yet Trump’s answer is to demand a reckless return to work—and to suggest that injecting disinfectant might be a way to stop the spread of disease.

“I see the disinfectant, where it knocks it out in a minute,” he said at a press conference. “One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning?”

FRANCE

Deaths in custody as police target black people

by CHARLIE KIMBER

IN JUST a week from 8 April, five people died after contact with French police imposing lockdown restrictions.

Three others have been seriously injured.

The Rebellyon website says Mohammed, a homeless man, died at the Beziers police station after being arrested by municipal police for “noncompliance with the curfew”.

At least one of the officers sat on the man lying face down and handcuffed him in the car.

“Because you see it gets in the lungs, and it does a tremendous number on the lungs. So it would be interesting to check that.”

Experts fear that a return back to work too soon could have devastating consequences.

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director Robert Redfield has said that a second wave of infection could be especially dangerous. That’s because it will come at flu season.

Meanwhile, the economy is entering “the biggest negative shock since the Second World War” said Kevin Hassett, senior economic adviser to Donald Trump.

Reactionary protests against quarantine, often organised by far right forces have been spreading across the US. Some 2,500 protestors gathered in Olympia, Washington, last Sunday.

Trump said of those protesting, “They’ve got cabin fever. They want their lives back. These people love our country.

“They want to get back to work.”

But health workers in Colorado and Pennsylvania have held counter-protests urging people to stay home.

The US is heading for an economic slump, one that working class people should not pay for.

But opening up the economy before the virus is under control in the US will have terrible consequences.



On other pages...

How capitalist priorities mean food is destroyed >> **Pages 10&11**

In La Courneuve Park, which is presently closed, on the edge of Paris a young man of Afghan origin was spotted by mounted police. They alleged he was holding a knife and had attacked a horse.

They shot him dead.

Police have carried out 15.5 million stops and administered 915,000 fines. People from Arab and African backgrounds have been targeted.

The racism and violence of the police has seen rioting in parts of Paris and other cities, which has been denounced by establishment politicians. Police

have also targeted activists.

In Caen, the municipal police came to a home to remove a banner with an anti-austerity message.

The house occupant faced interrogation.

In Marseille a banner criticising unequal access to tests led to a house search.

And in Toulouse police removed a banner saying, “Macronavirus, when will it be over”—a reference to French president Emmanuel Macron.

The owner was arrested and charged with contempt of the head of state

Riot cops in Paris

Teachers make PPE

MY PARTNER is a teacher at a Sheffield school where they have been making thousands of plastic visors.

This is to meet the demand from NHS and frontline workers who have received little or no PPE.

The initiative started when Design Technology teachers realised that they had the equipment to be able to start manufacturing visors themselves.

Each day teachers have been coming to the school to help make and deliver the visors.

They have been producing thousands every week.

The demand for the equipment has been overwhelming.

It really exposes the government's lies that frontline workers are receiving protection.

Other schools in the area have joined in to help and local companies have donated the plastic needed to make the visors.

Teachers are organising to make this vital equipment because the government is unable or unwilling to do it.

Nationally schools have produced around 125,000 visors. Sheffield schools have produced around 12,000 of these.

It exposes the dire lack of protection that the government is providing but shows what can be achieved when workers take the initiative.

It also shows that, contrary to current government policy on education, practical subjects like Design Technology have a vital role to play in schools.

John Ross
Sheffield



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

The oil crisis harms workers

MANUFACTURER of wind blades and turbines Vestas is to throw 400 workers on the scrapheap.

Vestas management are spooked by the collapse of oil prices.

In July 2009, Vestas workers in Britain occupied their premises against sackings and closure.

We need nationalised renewables such as wind power, under workers' control—not kneejerk reactions to the temporary drop in electricity demand caused by the lockdown.

Mike Killian
Manchester

Unions have to go further

THE MINUTE silence called for the by the unions is a step in the right direction.

One more step is support for the £29 per day bonus for front line workers which was suggested in the media last week.

This should be an absolute minimum.

Tommy Ewing
Liverpool

We need more action at work

I HOPE we can do more workplace action to frighten the government into behaving like a government which cares about people.

@YetiBach
On Twitter

Labour is now too right wing

I'VE FALLEN out with Labour. It's too right wing now for my liking

Carol Robinson
On Facebook

● I AM heartbroken on behalf of my Labour Party friends at the disgusting revelations contained in the leaked report of the anti-left conspiracy within the party.

However I also think they should take a long hard look at the Labour Party.

It is not and has never been a party capable of delivering anything beyond the most modest reforms.

Russ Chandler
East London

Remember the dead but keep up fight for the living

THE 28 April was International Workers' Memorial Day where the trade union movement unites to remember people killed at work.

This is a particularly poignant year for Glasgow Socialist Workers Party branch as we remember the passing of our comrade Drew McEwan.

Drew died last year of mesothelioma caused by his exposure to asbestos while working in the shipyards of Govan in the 1970s.

In the midst of a global pandemic it is easy to forget about other health hazards.

But asbestos is still the number one occupational killer in Britain with over 5,000 deaths per year. It

is estimated that there is still up to six million tons of asbestos present in 1.5 million buildings in Britain.

Many workers are still being exposed to danger by their employers today, especially those in the construction trade.

Thousands of incidents happen each year where workers are being exposed to asbestos fibres by employers wilfully ignoring regulations. Bosses cutting corners costs workers' lives.

Gordon Leggate
Glasgow

● I RETIRED from a local authority day centre providing support to people with dementia last year.

I received a phone call from a

former colleague who informed me that six of the service users had passed away with Covid-19.

The staff spent more time with the service users than their own families. Now we can't even say goodbye.

The staff did their highly skilled work without adequate personal protective equipment (PPE). Now they have been moved to another unit working with vulnerable adults, without any tests.

Staff don't want badges. They want proper testing and PPE, and an opposition that will lead this fight and put the lives of our loved ones before profit.

John Carr
Liverpool

Government ignoring people with disabilities

I WOULD like to raise a concern I have regarding both mine and my husband's disabilities.

We are both registered blind and have osteoarthritis.

I also have degenerative disc disease plus fibromyalgia.

But we seem to not be eligible on the government website for supermarket deliveries.

My husband is nearly totally blind.

I am blind in one eye and have limited partial sight in

the other. How can people who are visually impaired see to socially distance?

I keep trying to get online deliveries but we just can't get a slot.

Instead we are forced to go into town and queue up, putting our lives at risk.

The government's message is stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

How can we if we can't get an online shopping delivery slot?

Vanessa Pawlik
Halifax

We need to care for planet, not profit

THERE IS another aspect to Captain Cook's "discovery" of Australia that has a very contemporary resonance (Socialist Worker, 8 April).

Many early colonists described the landscape they encountered as looking like a "gentleman's estate".

Over millennia, aboriginal people shaped their environment using small scale controlled fires. Reducing the amount of combustible undergrowth and creating open spaces that

facilitated hunting and acted as firebreaks against the spread of fires.

They also held a set of beliefs that gave each group a duty of protection over the land they occupied, making its devastating loss to the colonists that much more traumatic. After they were robbed of their land, it was allowed to grow over.

And dangerous, large scale fires became more common, culminating in the devastation earlier this year. The aboriginals aimed to provide all their people with a reliable and

sustainable living.

So they could more effectively protect their environment than the Australian government can now.

Simon Gilbert
Oxford

A SYSTEM OF WASTE AND ROT

More than 250 million people face food uncertainty by the end of this year, while producers are destroying food on an extraordinary scale. **Sadie Robinson** investigates a system that puts profit before need

THE WORKS of the roots of the vines, of the trees, must be destroyed to keep up the price and this is the saddest, bitterest thing of all. Carloads of oranges dumped on the ground. The people came for miles to take the fruit, but this could not be.

“How would they buy oranges at twenty cents a dozen if they could drive out and pick them up? And men with hoses squirt kerosene on the oranges, and they are angry at the crime, angry at the people who have come to take the fruit.

“And the smell of rot fills the country.” John Steinbeck wrote the Grapes of Wrath, an indictment of the appalling treatment poor people faced during the Depression, in 1939. Similar crimes continue today.

The coronavirus crisis got underway with politicians bemoaning panic buying in supermarkets and tabloids warning of food shortages. Now food is being deliberately destroyed—in huge amounts.

One US chicken processor described smashing 750,000 unhatched eggs every week. US farmers are dumping 14 million litres of milk every day. In Britain, around five million litres a week are at risk of being wasted.

Farmers across the world are ploughing vegetables back into the ground. The cost of picking and packing them would be higher than what they’d

FACT CHECK

Too much food—but not enough to eat

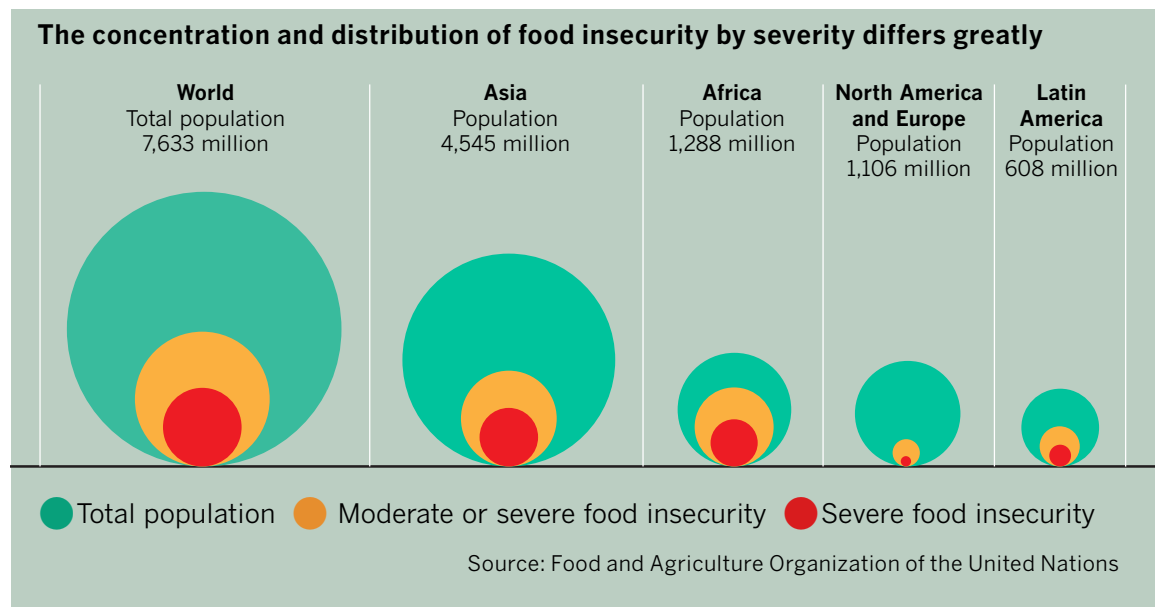
ONE IN nine people worldwide don’t have enough to eat, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. Its annual food security report last year said that over 820 million people are undernourished.

For decades the number of undernourished people across the world was falling. But since 2015 numbers have been rising.

The report said, “The situation is most alarming in Africa where [prevalence of undernourishment] shows slight but steady increases in almost all subregions.”

Rates of undernourishment had also risen in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The report warned that “9.2 percent of the world population (or slightly more than 700 million people) were exposed to severe levels of food insecurity in 2018”.



expect to get back—and there aren’t the facilities to store produce.

Meanwhile the coronavirus crisis will double the number of people suffering severe food shortages, according to the United Nations.

It estimated that around 265 million people will face acute food insecurity by the end of this year.

This is the utter irrationality of food



to China has had a knock on effect across the globe.

But the cause of food waste goes much deeper. Before the crisis hit, a third of food grown globally wasn’t being eaten.

In October last year, Scotland’s milk surplus was set to surpass 200 million litres in 2019-20. The surplus has more than doubled over the last five years.

Industry spokespeople in the US reassure us that there are hundreds of millions of pounds of meat in cold storage.

Consume

If wasted food were a country, it would be the third biggest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the US.

Food waste isn’t about individual shoppers buying too much and chucking it in the bin. The UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimated that 60 percent of food waste in Europe takes place before it gets near consumers.

Waste and overproduction are built into the system because it is based on competition.

Let’s assume that a set of schools in a given area consume 100,000 litres of milk a month. If there are four dairy suppliers, they will not get together and plan to produce 25,000 litres each.

Instead, each will want to supply all of it in order to grab the maximum profit. So they will produce more than

is needed. This tendency to overproduction is everywhere under capitalism because of the constant pressure on bosses to compete and boost profits.

Capitalism also works to concentrate power in a smaller number of hands.

Companies that compete successfully swallow up smaller ones. This is why, for instance, the average farm size has gone up while the number of farms has dropped.

And it’s why the food industry is now dominated by a handful of obscenely rich agribusinesses such as Cargill, Nestle and PepsiCo.

These firms are driven by profit, not by planning food production and distribution to meet need. Instead, food is a commodity to be bought and sold in a vast global market.

This and the inequalities of the system distort food production in a myriad of ways.

Countries in debt can become trapped into agreements to produce certain goods over others, regardless of whether this meets people’s needs.

Across Africa, pressure to pay interest on debts has strengthened a trend to focus resources on producing crops for export, not domestic consumption.

This generates a bigger return. But it means countries with malnourished

FACT CHECK

£20 billion of ‘waste’ food

A REPORT on food waste in “primary production”—or the farm stage—last year tried to estimate the scale of food waste in Britain.

The report by food waste consultant Wrap said food waste “occurs along the whole food supply chain”.

In 2015 it estimated that waste across manufacturing, retail, hospitality and food service and households “amounted to around 10 metric tonnes, with a value of more than £20 billion”.

But it said waste at the farm stage is harder to quantify “because farming is subject to the uncertainties of the natural world”.

Nonetheless, it estimated that the total amount of food surplus and waste was 3.6 million tonnes per year, or 7.2 percent of all food harvested. If all of this was sold at market values, it would be worth £1.2 billion.

Wrap estimated that of this figure, food waste made up 1.6 million tonnes per year, or 3.2 percent of all food harvested.

Read the report at bit.ly/Wrap-report

people export food. The stranglehold of supermarkets on the food industry drives up waste (see box). And bosses and governments hoard food to control prices.

Two years ago, the Politico website was wringing its hands over Europe’s “hidden milk lake”. The concern wasn’t with milk being hoarded while millions starve. It was that the surplus could threaten profits.

Whether people get enough to eat doesn’t simply depend on what is produced. It’s about whether those at the top will make it available and whether you have money to buy it.

And the cost of food is skewed by other people looking to make profit.

Investors

The vast gambling den that is the financial market wreaks havoc with the food industry. Speculators gambling on “futures” prices of food commodities can drive up the value—a disaster for people who can no longer afford it.

During the 2007-08 financial crash, spring wheat prices as measured on US markets rose by 25 percent in just one day. The volume of agricultural futures and options—mechanisms for speculation—grew by nearly a third between 2006 and 2007.

Investors saw food as a “safer” commodity to invest in. And while their actions helped send food prices soaring, more people starved.

At the time the FAO pointed out that there was, on average, 15 percent more food available per person than there had been 20 years previously. And this was despite the global population rising by 1.8 billion people.

This time around, speculators have again rushed to see if there’s a chance to make a quick buck out of the crisis.

So dairy futures are down. But frozen concentrate orange juice futures soared by 25 percent in one month.

While millions go hungry, the system pushes others to consume more than they need. None of this is about what is best for ordinary people, but about what’s best for profits. The milk and food that’s currently being destroyed

could be used to feed the 820 million people chronically undernourished across the world.

The vegetables being ploughed back into the soil could be harvested and distributed.

But getting this kind of shift will take a big battle. A socialist society, based on collective, democratic planning, would have no concern with what makes profit for a few fat cats. It could develop genuinely sustainable food production that made sure no one goes hungry.

Sustainable food production is impossible as long as the priority is profit. And states are loathe to “interfere” with the market to make sure people get food. We can’t rely on them to challenge the big business interests that they represent.

If this chaotic and irrational system continues, people will starve while food is wasted on an industrial scale.

As Steinbeck wrote, “Children dying of pellagra must die because a profit cannot be taken from an orange. And coroners must fill in the certificate—died of malnutrition—because the food must rot, must be forced to rot.

“There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation.”

Supermakets of shame

A 2018 report from the Feedback group blasted the “systemic role that supermarkets play in the overproduction and waste of food” on British farms.

It said, “Food waste represents an ecological catastrophe of staggering proportions.

“Food waste begins at the first stage in the supply chain—on the farm.”

It explained how supermarket business practices produce huge amounts of waste.

“Trading practices, including order cancellations, last minute changes to forecasts, retrospective changes to supply agreements and the use of cosmetic specifications to reject produce, all cause food to be wasted,” it said.

“Produce rejected for cosmetic reasons, such as being the wrong shape, size or colour, was the biggest reason for food waste identified by farmers in this research.

“Supermarket contract practices were also identified as a major cause of waste.

“Due to natural uncontrollable

factors like weather and pests, farmers cannot control the final quantities they produce.

“To avoid risking the loss of contracts, farmers must meet buyers’ orders in full—to guarantee this, they must overproduce.

“The inflexibility of supermarket contracts has normalised overproduction and the resulting waste.”

Read the report at bit.ly/feedback-food-report

READ MORE

● **Capitalism and climate—the system’s recipe for disaster**
bit.ly/SW-climate-capitalism-disaster

● **Big business sells veganism to mask its crimes**
bit.ly/SW-veganism-business

● **The Myth—Scarcity. The Reality— There IS enough food**
bit.ly/foodfirst-report



WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

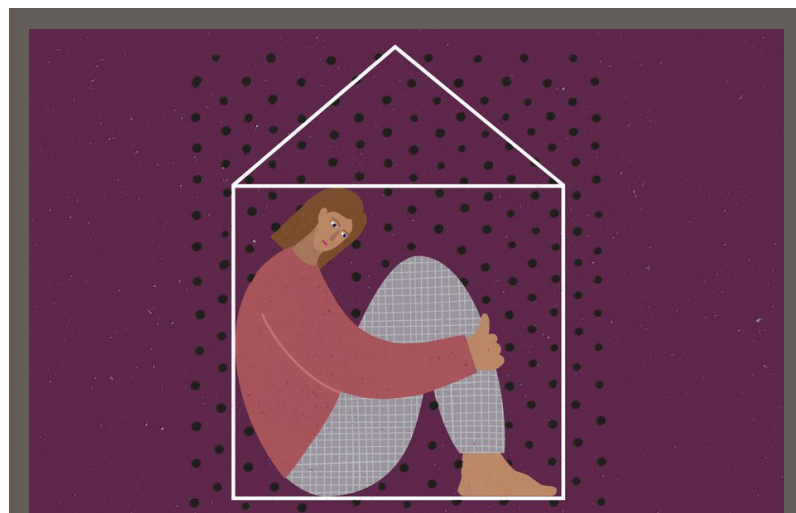
To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



Coronavirus, capitalism and mental health

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom
291-634-5938

CARDIFF

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom
630-181-4857

ESSEX

Thu 7 May, 7pm
Zoom
633-929-2968

KENT

Fri 17 Apr, 7.30pm
Zoom
434-630-8064

LEEDS

Thu 7 May, 7pm
Zoom
856-912-7408

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }
ONLINE MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BLACK COUNTRY

Lenin at 150—why his ideas still matter

Wed 6 May, 8pm
Zoom 352-891-2411

BOLTON & WIGAN

Police and the state

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom 604-325-1447

BRADFORD

From the Second World War to coronavirus—we're not 'all in it together'

Thu 7 May, 7pm
Zoom 566-006-189

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Cuts, privatisation and coronavirus

Thu 7 May, 6.30pm
Zoom 391-959-429

BRISTOL

Race and class today

Wed 6 May, 7pm
688-397-3148

BURNLEY & PENDLE

After Sanders—where next for the US left?

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom
446-409-5118

CAMBRIDGE

A rebel's guide to Engels

Thu 7 May, 5pm
Zoom

681-800-4408

CHESTERFIELD

Can workers run society?

Thu 7 May, 6.30pm
Zoom
828-532-8731

DUNDEE, ABERDEEN & PERTH

Coronavirus, capitalism and the economic crisis

Wed 6 May, 8pm
Zoom 396-573-1805

EDINBURGH

Socialists, the crisis and the way forward

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom
737-521-8605

GLASGOW

Coronavirus, the family and women's oppression

Thu 7 May, 7pm
Zoom
559-617-450

HUDDERSFIELD

The state and crisis

Wed 6 May, 6.30pm
Zoom

304-919-9440

LIVERPOOL

Capitalism and the politics of food

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom

493-925-5919

LONDON: HACKNEY

Coronavirus and climate crisis

Thu 7 May, 7.30pm
Zoom 798-534-2585

LONDON: HARINGEY

Empire, pandemics and crisis

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom 459-388-1576

LONDON: ISLINGTON

After coronavirus—how could workers run society better?

Thu 7 May, 6.30pm
Zoom 874-012-7970

LONDON: NEWHAM

Coronavirus, the family and women's oppression

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom 736-446-743

LONDON: SOUTH

Coronavirus—how Trump is failing the US

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom

497-196-1801

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

From the Second World War to coronavirus—we're not 'all in it together'

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom 530-913-6390

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Does crisis lead to revolution?

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Booklaunch: 'Transgender Resistance, Socialism and the Fight for Trans Liberation' with Author Laura Miles

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
Zoom

543-030-057

LONDON: WEST AND NW

Fake news and alternative facts—who controls the media?

Thu 7 May, 7.30pm
Zoom 731-479-3555

MANCHESTER

Can workers run society?

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom 891-6510-3157

NEWCASTLE

Coronavirus, the family and women's oppression

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom 368 595 7212

NORWICH

Coronavirus and the fight for disability rights

Wed 6 May, 7.30pm
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Coronavirus, the family and women's oppression

Wed 6 May, 7pm
Zoom

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Coronavirus, the family and women's oppression

Thu 7 May, 6.30pm
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Booklaunch: 'Vital signs: the deadly cost of health inequality' with author Lee Humber

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Zoom 488-934-2909

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Can workers run society?

Thu 7 May, 7pm
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From the Second World War to coronavirus—we're not 'all in it together'

Thu 7 May, 7.30pm
Zoom 248-448-3170

YORK & SCARBOROUGH

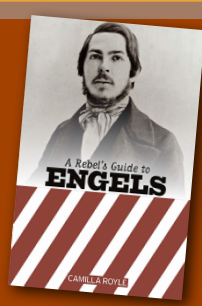
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Shabazz Palaces' new album breaks Hip Hop conventions

The Don of Diamond Dreams is far from cliché pop rap. It's experimental, cathartic and interesting—but doesn't always make sense, writes **Yuri Prasad**

HIP HOP today is such a divided house that the genre can barely hold it together.

On the one side pop rappers are stuck in cliché and routine formulas.

But on the other experimental groups are feeling free to stray into far away musical and lyrical territory.

Longstanding Seattle duo Shabazz Palaces—who've just released a new album, *The Don of Diamond Dreams*—are firmly in the second category.

The pair are Ishmael Butler, once known as Butterfly of hip hop outfit Digable Planets, and multi-instrumentalist Tendai "Baba" Maraire.

They've drawn from George Clinton and Sun Ra and fused them with the contemporary sounds of Thundercat and Flying Lotus.

Musically, the result is often



The Don of Diamond Dreams

about as cathartic as hip hop gets—and all the more interesting for it.

But as to what they are rapping about I couldn't really tell you.

Take the track Money Yoga, which I really like and concludes with a great winding sax solo.

Just occasionally I could get hold of the lyric and follow it, only for it to disintegrate into something else.

And maybe that's their point.

We are so used to rap being encapsulated stories, with conventional narratives, that something different has to be done if hip hop is to evolve.

Maybe trying to tell a story just isn't the name of the game anymore.

But there are real dangers to the conceptual approach.

Sometimes it just sounds like the stream of consciousness of someone who's smoked a bit too much.

The Don of Diamond Dreams, out now



BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH and Jonny Lee Miller as Frankenstein and his monster

Watch a monster production online

THEATRE

FRANKENSTEIN

Available on the National Theatre's YouTube channel, 7pm 30 April—7pm 8 May

THE NATIONAL Theatre will stream a free showing of its hit 2011 performance of *Frankenstein* from Thursday.

Childlike in his innocence but grotesque in form, Frankenstein's bewildered creature is cast out into a hostile universe by his horror-struck maker.

Meeting with cruelty wherever he goes, the increasingly desperate and vengeful creature determines to track down his creator and strike a terrifying deal. This production sees

Benedict Cumberbatch and Jonny Lee Miller alternating between the roles of Victor Frankenstein and his creation.

The National Theatre will show both, with Benedict Cumberbatch performing as the creature from 30 April to 7 May.

The version with Jonny Lee Miller as the creature will show from 1 May to 8 May at 7pm.

DOCUMENTARY

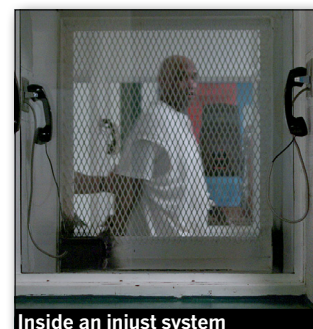
THE INNOCENCE FILES

Available now on Netflix

THIS DOCUMENTARY series chronicles the work of the Innocence Project and other organisations in the Innocence Network fighting to overturn wrongful convictions.

Divided into three parts, the series dives deep into three different causes of wrongful conviction in the US.

Over nine episodes, *The Innocence Files* tells the stories of eight people—Chester Hollman III, Kenneth Wyniemko, Alfred Dewayne Brown, Thomas Haynesworth, Franky Carrillo, Levon Brooks, Kennedy Brewer and Keith



Harward—how they were wrongfully convicted, and their uphill battles for justice.

DOCUMENTARY

THE PRICE OF EVERYTHING

Available now on BBC iPlayer

THIS FILM from 2018 was shown on BBC4 on Monday, and is now available on BBC iPlayer.

It explores the labyrinthine art world of the 21st century. And it examines how works by certain artists can reach



Jeff Koons

such staggering prices.

Jeff Koons, who features in the film, is famed for his stainless-steel replicas of balloon creatures and outsized sculptures that sell for tens of millions of pounds.

Yet many of his recent works are made by a large team of assistants—and Koons may barely touch the pieces sold in his name.

The film exposes deep contradictions in the lucrative art market.

A major slump is coming. Whether bosses or workers pay the price is up for grabs.

The credit crunch of 2008 was followed by brutal austerity assaults on public services and working class living standards. Globally it left millions of people living in poverty and hunger.

But mainstream economists say that the crisis coming now could be far worse. They say it might be more like the great depression of the 1930s.

This was an era of mass unemployment and the rise of fascism—as well as titanic workers' struggles.

This year global GDP is expected to fall for the first time since the Second World War.

The coronavirus crisis has exposed the inability of the free market to meet human need. And many ordinary people won't want a return to the "normal" of austerity and inequality afterwards.

But that will mean breaking from a system that has crisis built into it. Commentators talk of economic crises as external upsets to a free market system that would otherwise work properly.

But global capitalism was already weak before coronavirus and the lockdowns. It never recovered properly from the global crash of 2007-8.

And while that crisis ripped through the banking sector and the housing markets, it was only a symptom of a much deeper crisis of profitability.

Overproduction

Economic crisis flows from how capitalism—based on production for profit not human need—is organised.

The revolutionary Karl Marx argued that capitalism has "anarchy" in the marketplace and "despotism" in the workplace.

While there is planning inside businesses, there is no planning between firms, sectors or across the economy as a whole.

This leads to overproduction of commodities that aren't bought and scarcity of others.

The bizarre news of oil prices turning "negative" for the first time in history last week is one example of this anarchy. There's a flood of oil that no one wants to buy on the market—and, in the US, nowhere to store it.

Oil prices began falling when the Chinese government was forced to impose a lockdown in Wuhan and other provinces in January. Within weeks China, the world's largest importer of oil, saw its consumption fall by 20 percent.

But at the same time Saudi Arabia launched a price war against Russia to grab a bigger slice of the market. This meant that just as demand



LEHMAN BROTHERS filed for bankruptcy in 2008 triggering a massive crisis

WHO WILL PAY FOR THE CRISIS NOW?

A global pandemic has exposed just how fragile the world economy already was. **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** examines why capitalism constantly creates economic crises



Stock market chaos

was collapsing, production increased because the Saudis wanted to damage a rival.

Competition doesn't just create overproduction. It can lead to a crisis of low profitability, which is the root cause of economic slump.

What's becoming more evident under the lockdowns is that it's not billionaires who make wealth. It is workers' labour that creates value.

As Marx wrote in 1868, "Every child knows a nation



There will be a battle about what comes afterwards—and who pays

which ceased to work, I will not say for a year, but even for a few weeks, would perish."

Workers are forced to sell their labour power—their ability to work—for a wage in order to make a living.

But they don't get paid back the full value of what they create. This gap is what Marx called "surplus value" and it is the source of capitalists' profits.

How much of this surplus value bosses grab for themselves depends on how efficient their

firm is. Corporations and states are locked into competition with one another and to outdo each other they plough profits back into investment, not just into bosses' personal wealth.

Competition forces capitalists to invest in more efficient methods of production—whether that's the latest IT technology or new factory equipment—to get ahead of or match their rivals.

While investing in new technology can help a firm gain big profits, it has bad consequences for capitalism as a whole.

Marx said that it is workers labour that creates new value. But most of the new investment goes into technology and machinery, not labour.

Over time the proportion invested in technology and machinery as opposed to labour increases.

You can see this trend in British manufacturing. While manufacturing is still an important part of the economy, the number of workers employed in the sector declined since the First World War.

Individual bosses still make billions. But, because workers' labour is the source of value, the amount of profit compared to the amount of investment falls.

How can bosses respond to low profitability? They can try to ramp up the rate of exploitation—longer hours, less pay, worse terms and conditions—to squeeze more surplus value out of workers.

Often this is accompanied by austerity and attacks on public services from governments.

There's another option—to clear out inefficient chunks of capital through bankruptcies and set the system up for the next boom—and the next bust.

As capitalism grew, Marx argued there was a "concentration and centralisation" of capital. A few large firms dominate the market.

If they went bust, it would leave gaping holes in the economy and could trigger a depression.

That's why banks and other large corporations are deemed "too big to fail" and receive huge bailouts.

Bailouts

The underlying cause of the 2008 crash was a crisis of profitability. In response governments pushed through punishing austerity to squeeze workers and pay for the bailouts of banks and corporations.

Central banks slashed interest rates and pumped cheap credit into the economy.

Rather than clearing out unprofitable bits of capital, it fuelled the growth of "Zombie firms".

These are companies on life support that wouldn't survive without credit.

In North America and Europe, between 10 and 20 percent of companies were zombies. Global debt has grown to over 300 percent of GDP.

This meant recovery was

weak and global capitalism was already vulnerable before the pandemic.

Once again states have responded to the coronavirus crisis by more bailouts for businesses.

But they have less room for simply pursuing the same policies of cheap credit that they did in 2007-8. Interest rates are already at historic lows.

While there will be bankruptcies, these are likely to be mainly among smaller rather than big business. So this will not do not very much to deal with the underlying crisis of profitability.

There will need to be a battle about what comes afterwards and who pays for this almighty slump.

Direction

Some sections of the ruling class can see ordinary people's anger at how society is run. The bosses' Financial Times newspaper argues its "time for a reset" for capitalism.

"Radical reforms—reversing the prevailing policy direction of the last four decades—will need to be put on the table," says one editorial.

"The leaders who won the Second World war did not wait for victory to plan for what would follow. The UK published the Beveridge Report, its commitment to a universal welfare state, in 1942.

"That same kind of foresight is needed today."

But capitalism's capacity to give reforms within the confines of the system is diminished. Huge chunks of capital had been destroyed in the war and this unleashed an unprecedented period of economic boom.

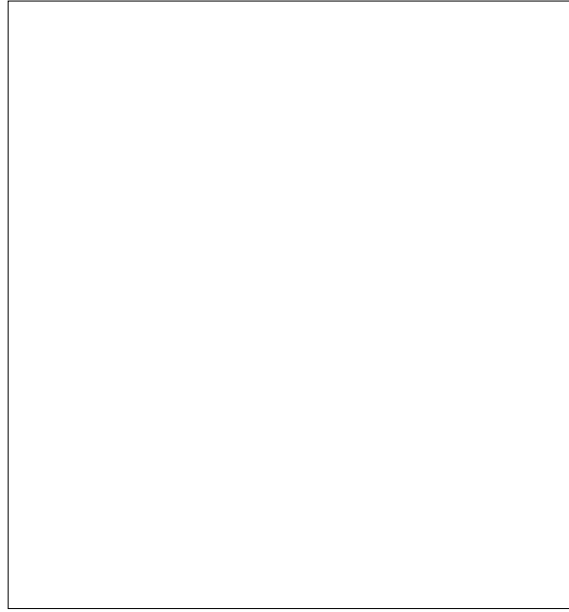
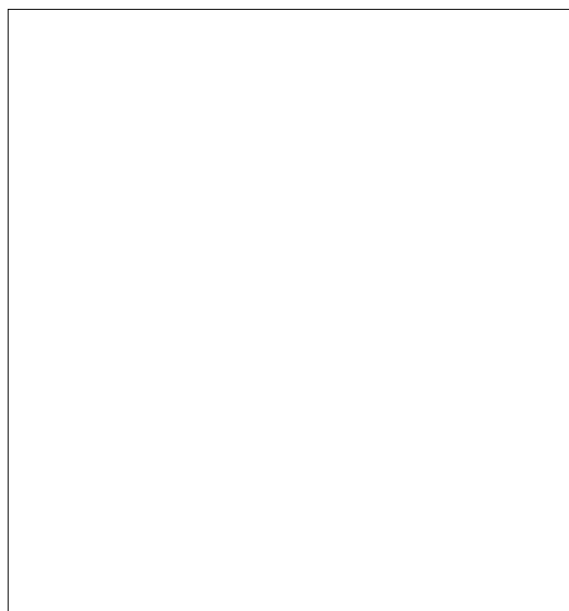
Today is a time of slump, and bosses are trying to squeeze workers more.

While bosses can argue for state intervention on the side of business now, they will demand workers pay the price.

George Osborne, the architect of Tory austerity, told the bosses' CBI organisation that increased state spending was necessary now. But he said bringing "public sector debt down" is something they would have to "focus on later".

Many people talked about the "death of neoliberalism" after the 2008 crisis because free market policies were exposed. Yet austerity followed to protect profits.

There were impressive struggles—for example the Arab Spring and the revolts against austerity in Europe. But in



The economic crash of the 1920s gave way to the hungry 1930s when millions across the globe were thrown out of their jobs (top) Nurses protesting against Wall Street greed in the wake of the 2007-8 crash (above)

general the radical movements were eventually blunted and thrown back.

Again many working class people are angry. And coronavirus has raised fundamental questions about how society is run.

But class struggle to win big changes is not inevitable.

Ensuring bosses don't make workers pay means encouraging struggle to shape the outcome of the crisis—now.

We have to reject the appeals for social peace and national unity from the Labour Party and many union leaders'

Struggle will be crucial to resisting the bosses and to impose a socialist solution onto the crisis.

Unless we break from the logic of the profit system, there will be further crises that bosses try to make our class pay for.

READ MORE

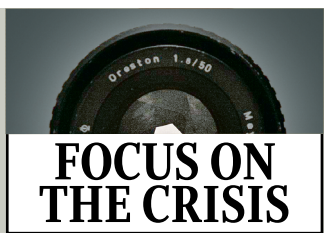
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Reopening schools won't help poor children

Governments claim they are reopening schools out of concern for children's welfare and safety. But **Sadie Robinson** reveals the real reasons

GOVERNMENTS are panicking about the economic impact of coronavirus on their system. And as one CNN reporter put it last week, "Nobody can completely reopen the economy if the schools are still shut."

Governments want schools open so parents can be pushed back to work. They claim more noble motivations.

In France, schools are set to gradually reopen from 11 May. French education minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said last week that this is "progressive".

"We need to save the pupils that are drifting away because of the lockdown," he said.

President Emmanuel Macron has also claimed reopening schools helps the most vulnerable. "Too many children, notably in poorer areas in the countryside, are deprived of school without access to digital tools," he said.

Governments have spent years slashing school funding and ramming through measures to drive up poverty.

So it's touching to see their concern. It's echoed by other establishment politicians.

Increase

In Britain Labour leader Keir Starmer has said reopening schools should be a priority because lockdowns increase inequalities.

In reality he is desperate to show Labour is "responsible" and can be trusted with "the economy". Closing schools does hit working class children—and their families—the hardest.

A study from the Sutton Trust educational charity last week showed that children from middle class homes were "much more likely" to join daily online lessons than those from working class families. More than

THERE'S A rush to get children back in the classroom

twice as many children from private schools had accessed online lessons each day compared to state schools.

It's much harder for parents with less space, money and resources to have their kids at home full time than it is for richer families.

Lots of working class families face the added stress of having lost their jobs or suffered pay cuts.

The burden of full time childcare and home schooling hits working class women particularly hard.

Many poorer children won't have enough to eat, and for some children home won't be a safe place.

But governments that feign concern about the impact of school closures on ordinary people are hypocrites.

If they really cared, why not give all parents extra money? Send out food parcels to every household? Provide laptops, free broadband and textbooks? Suspend energy bills and put a freeze on rents and mortgage payments?

None of these things are impossible. Instead, politicians

can't even make sure schools that stay open have enough personal protective equipment.

Their priority is the health of their system, not our health.

Former Tory chancellor Philip Hammond said this week that Britain should start reopening the economy now—and accept that people will catch the virus.

He said we should assume that "for the time being, we are coexisting with this virus rather than conquering it".

And former Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith said having children back in school is "key to unlocking labour".

Others are more cautious because they fear the political and economic damage that a second peak in deaths could bring. But none have our interests at heart.

Coronavirus and lockdowns have hit the poorest hardest. Getting the economy moving again can sound good, especially if you have lost your job.

But moving back towards "business as usual" won't guarantee things get better for workers.

States will try to make ordinary people pay for the economic crisis they have presided over.

We should resist measures that put ordinary people at risk.

That doesn't mean schools should remain closed indefinitely.

But how they reopen and when should be guided by what's in the best interests of pupils and workers—not bosses.

Israel's new coalition is fresh threat to Palestinians

by NICK CLARK

AFTER MORE than a year of political deadlock, Israel is set for a new government committed to annexing huge chunks of the Palestinian West Bank.

The Israeli parliament—the Knesset—gave preliminary approval last week to a coalition agreement.

It allows racist war-monger Binyamin Netanyahu to continue as prime minister for a year and a half.

He will be propped up by former general Benny Gantz, who previously said he would oppose any Netanyahu-led government.

Annexing

The new coalition government could then begin annexing Israeli settlements and the Jordan Valley in the West Bank from as early as July.

The agreement comes after months of political deadlock—and three general elections.

Neither Netanyahu's Likud Party or Gantz's Blue and White—which campaigned on a platform of “anyone but Netanyahu”—could get

ISRAELI SOLDIERS attack Palestinian protesters in the Jordan Valley earlier this year

an outright majority. Blue and White's main issue with Netanyahu was over allegations of corruption.

It didn't oppose his racism towards Arabs or his plans to steal more Palestinian land.

Yet Gantz was prepared to drop this opposition to Netanyahu in return for a

place in government. Under the agreement, he will serve as defence minister before taking over as prime minister when Netanyahu's year and a half is up.

Blue and White has split. But Gantz and his supporters, combined with the backing of right wing nationalist

and religious parties, give Netanyahu a majority.

They all agree to plans that will deny Palestinians any kind of state alongside Israel. These were first outlined in a “peace deal” proposed by US president Donald Trump. From as early as July—with the backing of the US—the

Netanyahu-Gantz government could declare ownership of the Jordan Valley.

This huge chunk of the West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation since 1967.

The government also hopes to annexe land surrounding Israeli settlements—Israeli

towns built on Palestinian land under the occupation.

That would leave Palestinians with a tiny scrap of land, surrounded on all sides by Israel, and still under effective military occupation.

It puts an end to the idea that any form of two-state solution—where Palestinians would get an equal state alongside Israel—is possible.

Israel's Labor Party—once a dominant force in Israeli politics—has long since become a minor force due to its backing for a Palestinian state.

It has now signalled that it could drop that commitment in return for a role in Netanyahu's government.

Claim

No major party in Israel backs a two-state solution, which would mean giving up Israel's claim to Palestinian land in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

The real alternative is to support a single, secular state with equal democratic rights for all its citizens.

That means supporting any Palestinian resistance to the atrocities a Netanyahu-Gantz government will unleash.

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Cuts and Covid-19 are a deadly cocktail for care

The death toll from the coronavirus in care homes is a scandal, yet workers' demands for safety measures are still being ignored, reports Sarah Bates

A DEADLY cocktail of cuts, privatisation and coronavirus is pushing social services to the brink of collapse.

Social care was in crisis before the virus hit, with many care homes going to the wall.

Now on top of battling low pay, workers are also fighting dangerous management practices and a lack of life-saving protective kit.

Healthcare assistant Jennifer said working in a care home in Portsmouth left her feeling belittled, patronised and unsafe. Management bullying and poor working practices forced her to quit last week.

She explained how workers only received surgical masks two weeks ago—and were told to use a single one for a whole 12-hour shift.

“That makes no sense at all,” she said. “Obviously you’ll be touching your mask. But also some of the residents have dementia and some spit at you.”

Visors

“This virus can get in through the eyes, so why don’t we have visors?”

Jennifer raised concerns with managers, but was accused of being “paranoid”.

And when she started wearing a mask during work, she was accused of “scaring other residents and staff”.

“We should be kitted up so we’re not going to pass the virus to residents,” she argued. “They’re not going anywhere, so if they get Covid-19 it’s because people are bringing it in.”

Recent horrific reports have exposed how Covid-19 is tearing through care homes. Yet Jennifer

said the threat “wasn’t being taken seriously” in her former workplace.

“They say, ‘We haven’t got it [the virus] so we don’t need to worry,’” she said. “But I was scared—not just for myself, for the residents.”

Social care services have been transferred over decades from public hands to private pockets (see below). Some 84 percent of care home beds in England are now operated by for-profit firms. Charities provide 13 percent and councils just 3 percent.

Bosses take on contracts hoping to cream off profits from the care of vulnerable people. Residents’ lives are put at risk as quality of care is slashed.

Low pay and poor conditions mean a high staff turnover—so service users suffer from discontinuous care.

Jennifer has since found work at a council-run care home, where she’ll be paid an additional £4 an hour for carrying out an identical role.

But before she left, the private care home manager presented workers with a token of his appreciation for working during the pandemic.

Each member of staff received a balloon and a can of fizzy drink.

CASTLETROY CARE Home in Luton where 15 residents have died of Covid-19 is rated as ‘requires improvement’

Kick the privateer fat cats out of social care

Privatisation schemes rolled out under Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair laid the groundwork for Tory austerity that has smashed through the social care sector.

Gordon Peters from the Reclaim Social Care campaign told Socialist Worker that care has been “offloaded from the public system in the last 30 or 40 years”.

Tory austerity has accelerated the care crisis as government cuts wreck council budgets.

In England local authorities have faced a reduction to core funding from the government of

nearly £16 billion over the preceding decade. Dozens of local authorities reported last year that they faced financial collapse.

These cuts have a drastic impact on the most vulnerable people.

“Austerity has devastated social care,” said Gordon. “For instance, there were something like 750,000 meals on wheels delivered in 2010 that just don’t happen now.”

A lack of early-intervention community care forces more people into lengthy hospital stays. Many then stay in hospital longer than medically necessary because they don’t have



Protesting against council cuts in Bradford in 2016

appropriate care packages either in their own homes or residential facilities.

The privatised system makes it harder to implement system-wide practices for major incidents, such as pandemics, or even accurately record death

rates. Jane Lethbridge from the Centre for Research in Employment and Work explained how this system has led to care home deaths being obscured.

“The government is not directly responsible for how services are delivered—how services

fit into wider systems of accountability and how they are measured and assessed,” she said.

“The invisibility of care home deaths and the health and safety of care workers shows that social care services can no longer be dependent on for-profit companies.”

Gordon called for “universal social care funded through progressive taxation and available to all”.

All care services should be taken back in house by local government. They should be run on the basis of what benefits workers and users, not what makes profit for fat cats.

WHAT'S the government's plan for sorting out the adult social care mess?

In March 2017, then-prime minister Theresa May announced that a government Green Paper setting out its strategy, would arrive that summer.

This pledge was reiterated in the Tories' general election campaign in 2017.

Almost three years later, the Green Paper hasn't appeared. The Tories said last September that it would be published “in due course”—with no revised deadline.

Care workers get poverty pay

SOME two in three care workers in the private sector earn below the Living Wage

Up to 160,000 care workers are paid less than the legal minimum of the National Living Wage because they are not paid for all the hours they work.

Care workers are three times more likely than other workers to be employed through agencies

And 99 percent of frontline care workers say they still haven't been tested for coronavirus.

THE Labour Party announced at its conference last September that it wanted a “National Care Service”.

It pledged free personal care and more funding for the sector.

But it only agreed to “support authorities to directly provide, rather than outsource, care”.

Even under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, the party fell short of calling for care services to be renationalised.

Devastation as climate crisis drives huge plague of locusts

by SARAH BATES

MONSTROUSLY LARGE numbers of locusts are tearing through East Africa, leaving devastation and food shortages in their wake.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said that heavy rains across the region will mean the latest wave of locusts is up to 20 times bigger than a huge swarm that formed in January.

At the start of this year swarms reached up to 40 kilometres by 60 kilometres.

A single swarm covering one square kilometre contains up to 80 million locusts and can eat the same amount of food in one day as 35,000 people.

The forthcoming onslaught could be several hundred times bigger. The next generation of swarms is due to form in late June and early July—the start of the harvest season.

The invasion risks exacerbating an already precarious food situation in the Horn of Africa. Some 40 percent of the 160 million people in the region are undernourished.

The FAO points to rapidly-growing swarms in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, some of which are expected to migrate to South Sudan, Yemen and Uganda.

In the last few months African countries have reported a shortage of aircraft to carry out spraying of locust swarms.

Bombing

Those Western governments that are always capable of bombing people from the air have not provided the aircraft to save them.

Supplies of pesticides and spraying equipment have further dried up as Covid-19 brings supply chains to a halt.

And in any case pesticides are hugely damaging for the crops and ecosystems left behind.

The chemicals used can have a terrible impact on bees and other pollinators critical for long-term food security. Climate change is the

BACK STORY

Cyclones and abnormal weather are creating mass locust swarms

● Droughts and floods have already exacerbated food insecurity across Africa

● Southern Africa was hit by Cyclone Idai in 2019. It brought destruction in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi

● Africa is set to be particularly badly hit by global soaring temperatures—20 of the fastest warming countries are in the continent

driving factor behind the swarms.

Francesco Rigamonti, the Oxfam charity's regional humanitarian coordinator, said January's outbreak "was clearly worsened by unusually heavy rains in the region and there is an interaction with the unusual cyclonic activity".

"It's difficult to say that it is due to climate change—but there is an interaction between the two," he said.

"We are having a lot of extreme events like droughts, floods and now locusts in the region."

Formed

Heavy rains in May and October 2018 meant two generations of desert locusts formed into swarms.

"We know that cyclones are the originators of swarms," said Keith Cressman, FAO senior locust forecasting officer.

"In the past ten years, there's been an increase in the frequency of cyclones in the Indian Ocean."

Immediate and internationally coordinated action is needed now to destroy the swarms.

The disastrous US-led invasion of Somalia in 1992-3 cost at least the equivalent of £3.5 billion today.

The US has pledged less than 0.2 percent of that to fight locusts.

Only urgent and radical action on the climate catastrophe can tackle the locusts and the system that breeds them.

A FARMER in Kenya runs through a swarm of locusts in an attempt to chase them off

TRANS RIGHTS

Tory minister threatens dangerous rowback on Gender Recognition Act

COMMENTS BY Women and equalities minister Liz Truss signal the government may block trans people's rights to some services.

Truss announced that the Tory government will publish its response to reforming the Gender Recognition Act by the summer.

It's been over two years since plans to reform the trans rights legislation were announced and nearly a year and half since the government's GRA consultation closed. Reform could increase trans people's rights to change their legal gender.

Backtracking

But the government may be backtracking on such commitments.

Truss said there will have to be "checks and balances" in trans people's right to access some single-sex services. She also raised the separate issue of access to medical care for trans children and young people.

Truss said that she wants to "protect" trans children from making "irreversible decisions".

But any moves to block often

life-saving services for trans 16 and 17 year olds will not protect them. Gender services are already stretched to breaking point.

There are only a small number of gender identity clinics in Britain and it was reported last year that some have year-long waiting lists.

And references to gender identity was scrapped from the school curriculum by the Tory-Liberal Democrat coalition of 2010-15.

In 2017 LGBT+ charity

Stonewall reported that four in five trans young people have self-harmed and two in five have tried to kill themselves.

After Truss's statement, Stonewall said the way she spoke about trans people was "concerning". "It sounds similar to how young lesbian, gay and bi people were spoken about in the 1980s," it said in a blog post.

Vulnerable

"We were often told that young lesbian, gay and bi people are impressionable, vulnerable and don't understand themselves.

"So we can't let history repeat itself and a roll back of existing rights happen because the same arguments are now being made about trans people."

NHS guidelines say that people over the age of 16 can make decisions about the medication they receive without the consent of a parent.

That should be defended.

Truss's statement is a reminder that rights still have to be fought for.

Sophie Squire

Trans rights must be defended

PIZZA HUT

Protests after pizza firm takes away pay

by MICHAEL HOLLAND

PIZZA HUT workers, supported by Croydon Solidarity Network, organised a picket line and protest outside Pizza Hut in Penge, south London, last week.

About 25 people—made up of the workers and their supporters—chanted, “Pay up Pizza Hut”.

Protests also took place in Lewisham Way and Wandsworth on Saturday.

The south London ATEAM franchise has left nearly 40 workers across six outlets without pay for five weeks and not placed them on furlough.

The workers have been demanding answers from franchise owner Simon Byrne for some time.

Parent

But it is only within the last few days that some workers have been paid some of their owed wages by the parent company.

Workers claim Byrne has offered to pay employees in olives and napkins instead of cash as he has a “large stockpile”.



CAMPAIGNING IN Lewisham, south London, last Saturday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Workers, who sometimes do 12-hour shifts and are not paid after 1am even if they continue working, have been left in dire financial straits.

Some are unable to pay rent and bills and have mounting debts.

The protest was loud, angry and visible and was supported by local NEU union

members, BFAWU union members and local residents.

The protest observed social distancing practices. But a van full of police still turned up to insist the picket moved away from the front of the outlet.

Once this had been acted upon, the police got back into their van and drove off, sitting

next to each other. Pizza Hut's main Twitter site has said that “We’ve been informed that head office is resolving this immediately”. But workers continue to protest until they win all their demands.

●Please express your support by tweeting at @pizzahutuk and @pizzahutdeliver using the hashtag #PizzaHutPayUP

POST WORKERS

Police ‘riot van’ arrives as workers oppose bosses

BOSSES AT a Royal Mail mail centre called the police after two workers refused to cooperate with bosses’ “unreasonable” demands.

Officials from the CWU union say a “riot van” turned up after managers at the South Midlands Mail Centre called the cops.

In a letter to members, CWU reps at the mail centre said, “Royal Mail over what could easily be described as a ‘petty’ issue opted to call the police, who actually came out with a riot van, to have these members removed from the building.”

Removed

They added, “Think about that for a second, your employer called the police to have two of your colleagues physically removed from our workplace.”

A CWU rep at the mail centre told Socialist Worker that the two workers—who operate a skilled section of the sorting process—were asked to move to another area.

They were to be replaced by less-skilled agency workers.

When they disagreed, the manager called the cops to have them removed.

The workers were later suspended. The rep said, “The fact that a riot van

pulled up outside the mail centre made people think, what the hell is going on?”

“It’s absolutely ludicrous.”

The incident—which happened on Tuesday 7 April—came as Royal Mail struggles with its response to the coronavirus.

Workload is increasing as many workers are off sick or self-isolating.

But chief executive Rico Back wants to continue with business as usual.

In some workplaces, this means managers are bringing in agency workers, and in others workers are scared about a lack of social distancing.

The rep explained that the two workers had previous disagreements with this manager—and calling the cops is an extreme reaction.

But he said some managers were “taking a leaf out of Rico Back’s book.”

The letter to members said, “It is baffling to the CWU how Royal Mail can reconcile themselves to the idea that this was a reasonable act.

“To date there has been no local managerial recognition that calling the police was wrong.”

Managers lifted the two workers’ suspensions on Thursday of last week.

Nick Clark

SCOTLAND

Sturgeon’s not so different

SCOTLAND’S first minister Nicola Sturgeon has started talking about a “new normal”. Not for the first time during the coronavirus crisis she echoed ministers in the Westminster parliament.

The press has been full of praise for the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader’s handling of the crisis—with even a depressing suggestion of a Clap for Nicola.

But Scotland too has seen its care home residents forgotten, where nearly half of all deaths have occurred.

Its carers have had to fight for personal protective equipment. They are meant to be grateful for a deal reached earlier this month to pay them £9.30 an hour to risk their lives.

The SNP followed the Tories to abandon contact tracing on 12 March.

Scotland now has a death rate unbecoming of the supposed nationalist land of milk and honey.

Similarly, its strategy for testing key workers has focused on a return to work.

It has also been revealed that the SNP sat on the findings of a 2015 flu pandemic exercise called Silver Swan that a former chief medical officer described as “prophetic”.

Sturgeon wrote in The Herald newspaper about “how to build a better Scotland” in the future. She talked of “inevitable changes in the labour market” and that “public services will also have to change”.

The Scottish government’s new economic recovery council is stuffed with pro-business figures.

Going on past practice from the SNP, the left should prepare for battle. **Raymie Kiernan**

LOGISTICS

Is it ‘probably the best deal’?

DRIVERS EMPLOYED by logistics company Bibby, which supplies cans for drinks manufacturers including Carlsberg, have won an agreement on health and safety after threatening to walk out.

Management agreed to a range of important measures pushed for by the workers’ Unite union.

They include cleaning products available for all warehouse staff and drivers and a dedicated lorry for each driver on day and night shifts.

Hand sanitiser will also be available on loading bays.

Unite regional officer Chris Gray said, “The drivers were not prepared to compromise their safety.

“The drivers led a campaign making clear they were prepared to walk out on health and safety grounds.”

PENSIONS

Court move on pensions

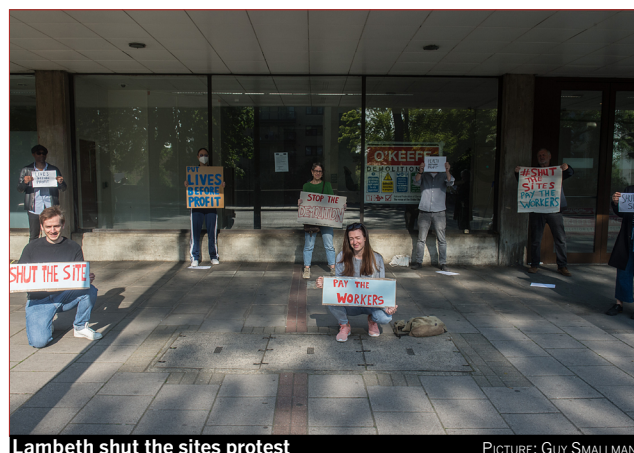
SEVERAL UNIONS have started court proceedings over the government’s withholding of improved pension benefits from hundreds of thousands of public service workers.

The unions say the government is in breach of new public service pension schemes

The regulations for these schemes require that if the formal valuation of the pension schemes show the cost to the government has increased or dropped beyond its own predetermined level, then the employee benefits must be changed accordingly.

The claim intends to force the government to improve employee benefits in line with its own regulations. The outcome of the case could affect anyone who joined the pension schemes on or after 1 April 2012.

COUNCILS



Lambeth shut the sites protest

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Fury at construction restart

LAMBETH COUNCIL in south London has disgracefully embarked on a big non-essential construction project in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, starting with the demolition of one of its own buildings.

Members of the Lambeth Coronavirus action group protested safely outside the building last week to send a message to the Labour council to halt the demolition and put people’s health before profits.

We called on the council to shut the site and furlough the workers on full pay.

Following the Tories’ advice

that construction work can go ahead, the council is pushing on regardless of the risk to life. It is giving the green light to their developers to build 74 homes, only 12 of which will be at an “affordable” rent.

Plain clothes cops who were waiting around the corner, warned us before we started that protesting is currently illegal and returned to threaten us with fines.

Local people on the other hand, welcomed the protest, joining the call to shut the site and pay the workers.

The fight for life against profit continues.

Micki Loebner

AS BOSSES SEEK RETURN TO BUSINESS AS USUAL...

MORE WILL DIE IF LOCKDOWN ENDS

by SADIE ROBINSON

BORIS JOHNSON said on Monday that ending the lockdown in Britain would spark a “new wave of death”.

Top Tories regularly stress that lockdown measures must continue.

In reality bosses are forcing more and more people back to work.

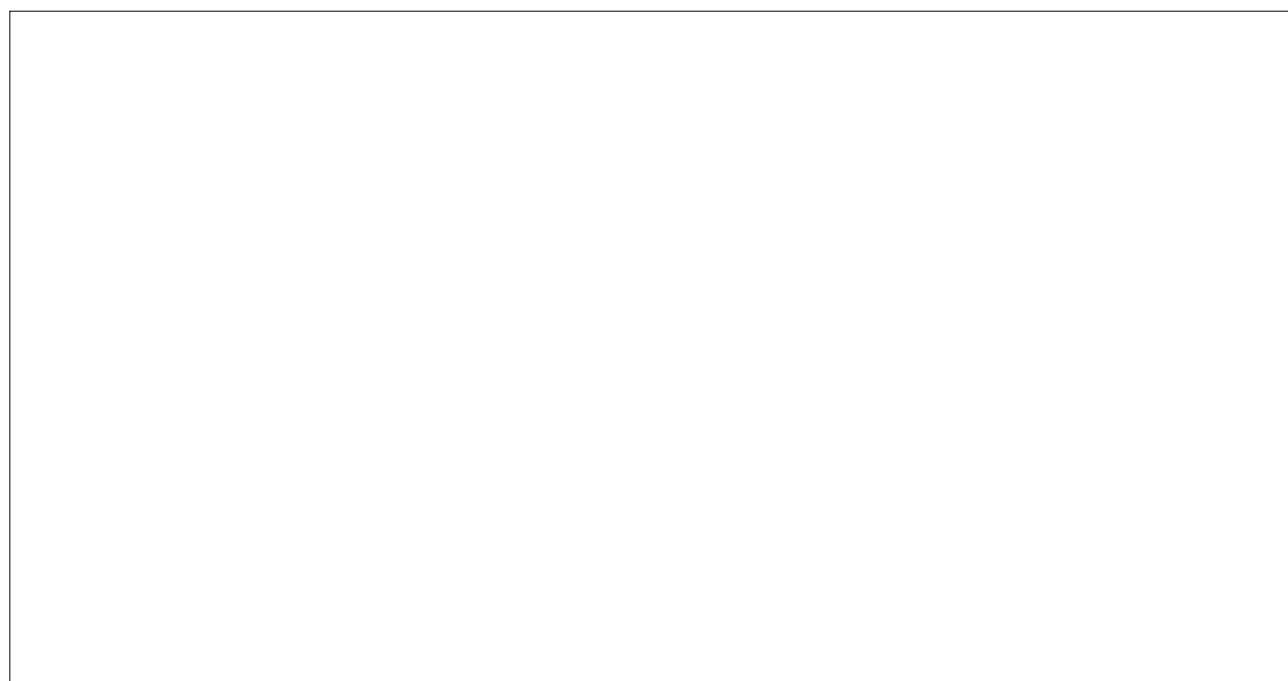
Persimmon, Britain’s second-biggest housebuilder, restarted work on Monday of this week. Workers at Vistry also returned to building sites on Monday, while those at Taylor Wimpey are set to return next week.

For all the rhetoric, the Tories are giving them the green light.

Tory housing secretary Robert Jenrick told Building magazine, “I welcome developers reopening sites. Work in construction can and should continue.”

One of Britain’s biggest brick-makers, Ibstock, also restarted production on Monday. And car makers Vauxhall, Jaguar Land Rover, Aston Martin and Bentley all plan to reopen.

B&Q reopened 155 stores last week, generating huge



THE TORIES encouraged construction bosses to reopen building sites—putting workers in extreme danger

queues. DIY retailer Homebase opened 20 shops on Saturday while Dixons Carphone said it will launch “zero contact” stores.

Many more are looking to get profits flowing again. So, the British Retail Consortium said on Sunday that clothes shops could reopen with

new rules to promote social distancing.

We are told this is in our interests and that workers will be kept safe.

Persimmon boss Dave Jenkinson said workers would return to “support the UK’s economic recovery” and that safety measures would be

“strictly enforced”. Yet all evidence suggests that bosses do not keep staff safe. And the Tories pushing for a return to work are driven by fears for bosses’ profits.

Yet disgracefully, Labour and union leaders are backing them up. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has repeatedly

called on the Tories to spell out a strategy to end the lockdown.

And Labour’s Rachel Reeves complained last week that school closures mean children “are missing out on vital days and weeks and months of their education”.

TUC general secretary

Frances O’Grady said, “We all want everyone to get back to work and start rebuilding Britain.”

But lifting lockdown measures will mean more people will die. Leading scientists said last weekend that the transmission rate for Covid-19 is still far too high in Britain to ease the lockdown soon.

Professor John Edmunds said, “If we lifted the lockdown now, the testing and tracing system would be overwhelmed. We will have to get case numbers down a lot lower than they are now before we can think of lifting current regulations.”

On Sunday some 4,463 new cases of coronavirus were reported in Britain. Professor Paul Hunter said this number needs to be down to “a few hundred a day” before the lockdown measures can be lifted.

“Such a decline could take months,” he warned.

The Tories and the bosses are gambling with our lives to get their system going again. We shouldn’t be fooled into backing them.

There should be no return until it is genuinely safe—and meanwhile workers’ wages must be guaranteed.

Teachers in France threaten to go on strike if schools reopen next month

TEACHERS IN France are preparing for strikes against a reopening of schools next month.

The plan, announced last week by president Emmanuel Macron, is a recipe for a new spike in coronavirus cases and deaths.

It will mean potentially nearly 900,000 teachers and 12 million students are brought together in classes.

Then there are all the administration and other support staff.

Alain, a teacher, told Socialist Worker, “It’s unbelievable that Macron is calling for this. How are

we supposed to maintain any sort of separation of children from each other and from the staff?

“How can we manage the playground, the nap in the kindergarten, the coming together for meals and so on?

“It won’t work for students and teachers. But it will mean that employees are made free to go back to work.”

The FNEC teachers’ union, which has filed a strike notice, points to the calls for a return to work from the Medef bosses organisation—the equivalent of the British

CBI. The union said, “The school is not a nursery for Medef. National education and its personnel should not be manipulated to meet the needs of the

market. This decision does not deceive anyone, especially since the universities remain closed. “Students there don’t need to be looked

after so managements are not concerned.

“If the minister persists in pushing schools to reopen at the cost of workers’ health, the FNEC FP-FO union will invite them to strike and we have given notice of a strike from 11 to 30 May.”

The CGT union federation also says that there should be no return at schools until September.

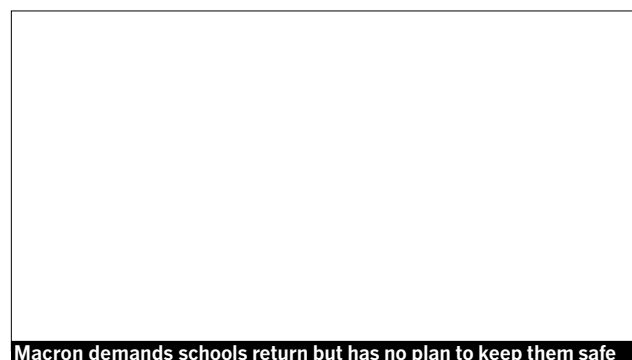
The French government’s own scientific council has said the return on 11 May is a “political decision” and that it would have preferred to wait until later in the year.

The teachers’ decision to strike is popular among wide sections of parents. One parent said, “My child brings back everything from school in terms of viruses and bacteria, it’s always like that. Why would this hugely contagious virus be an exception?”

If the Tories attempt a similarly reckless reopening of schools the unions will have to take similar action.

And it won’t be possible to go through all the mechanisms of the anti-union laws.

Charlie Kimber



Macron demands schools return but has no plan to keep them safe

★ **MAY DAY GREETINGS**



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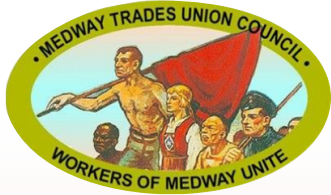


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MAY DAY GREETINGS ★



Medway TUC

Medway TUC demands...

- Solidarity with NHS workers
- Shut down all non-essential workplaces
- Full pay for all workers during the crisis

Brent Trades Union Council

Brent Trades Council
sends greetings to ALL
front line workers putting
their lives at risk
No returning to austerity!

Hackney TUC

**May Day Greetings
from Hackney Trades
Council to health and
care workers both
here and across the
world.
Kick out the health
profiteers**

Leeds TUC

**May Day
greetings from
Leeds Trades
Union Council**

**130 years of
fighting for
workers' rights**

Waltham Forest Trades Council

Waltham Forest Trades Council
sends May Day greetings to the
workers of the world

**TEST! TEST! TEST! PPE! KEEP
KEY WORKERS VIRUS FREE!**



Coventry TUC

- Test! Test! Test! PPE!
Keep our workers virus free!
- Solidarity to all workers and
their families this May Day



Newcastle TUC

**We support all workers
in the NHS
and social care**

President: M. Levy Secretary: J. Simpkin

**Leeds Unite Leeds N.E.Y.H GEO.11.Branch
send May Day greetings to all its members**



**May Day is workers' day. We therefore support all workers in
struggle. Everyone who is trying to defend their lot. Or trying to
improve it. We oppose all forms of racism, Islamophobia, or any
form of discrimination. Smash the rise of the far right, say no to
the Nazis. Support our youth against climate change.**



Unite NE 203/5 Tyneside Engineering branch

**PROTECT ALL WORKERS
KICK THE TORIES OUT**

**FORWARD TO WORKERS' CONTROL
AND A SOCIALIST WORLD**



MAY DAY GREETINGS

End academisation

May Day greetings and solidarity from the
Anti Academies Alliance

**Let's build a
National Education
Service together**

- Comprehensive and progressive
- Democratically accountable to local communities
- Fully funded and inclusive

Let's make a landmark statement for future generations by abolishing the social barbarism of grammars and selection and the structural inequality of private education



Twitter: @antiacademies
Facebook: Anti Academies Alliance
Email: office@antiacademies.org.uk
Website: www.antiacademies.org.uk

"A good
local school
for every
child"



**RE-NATIONALISE THE FOURTH EMERGENCY
SERVICE—ROYAL MAIL**

SOLIDARITY WITH ALL KEY WORKERS FROM
SOUTH CENTRAL POSTAL BRANCH

**DON'T LET THE TORIES WASH THEIR HANDS OF
THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR
CORONAVIRUS DEATHS**

MAY DAY GREETINGS FROM NIGEL COWARD

Redbridge
NEU

Socialist Worker supporters



**MAY DAY
GREETINGS**

Islington NEU



- May Day greetings
- People's lives before profit!
- Fund our schools!
- Give our children the future they deserve



Campaign Against Climate Change Trade Union Group

**SOLIDARITY TO THE
CLIMATE STRIKERS**

campaigncc.org



**South Yorkshire
Freedom Riders
fighting for elderly local free
train travel and better bus
services for all**

MAY DAY GREETINGS ★



Unite Against Fascism






FACEBOOK.COM/UAFPAGE



**MAY DAY
GREETINGS
TO ALL
ANTI-FASCISTS**



**May Day greetings
to Socialist Worker**

**Solidarity from
Leeds and
Wakefield Unite
Community Branch**



**Unite Glasgow
retired members
branch**

**PEOPLE'S HEALTH
BEFORE PROFIT**



**MAY DAY
GREETINGS**

**FROM THE UNITE HOUSING WORKERS
BRANCH (LE1111)**